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PORTRAITS WITH BACKGROUNDS



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Portrait of the Queen of Naples

PORTRAITS WITH BACKGROUNDS

by

CATHERINE BARJANSKY

in collaboration with

ELINORE DENNISTON

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1947

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First Printing

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This book is for Michael,
My son and my dearest friend

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CHAPTER ONE

PERSPECTIVE

THE people who move through the pages of this book have been encountered in many countries of the world and in many societies. I modeled them in wax, and now I have tried to sketch their portraits in words. The quick and the dead—for some of them are gone, as the world of which they were a part is gone—though some of them must live as long as our civilization exists.

The backgrounds that gave these portraits their perspective have faded, for the most part, reduced to rubble and dust and chaos. In a normal world, a world at peace, changes are so gradual as to be imperceptible. But Europe as I saw it lies in ashes. It exists only in the memory of those who knew it and walked its vanished streets. Much of it was beautiful, some of it contained the seeds of its own destruction.

There may be people who can sum up the past and divide it into neat categories, but I am not of their number. Living is a more complex process than that, and for the creative artist it is a long search, a continuous striving. The past for me, like all existence, is a series of pictures and a mass of color, most of it orchestrated by great music.

It is not my task to analyze the importance of the genius of Albert Einstein, nor to estimate the value of d'Annunzio and Madame Colette as writers, nor to criticize the sculpture of Antoine Bourdelle and Carl Milles. That will be done more successfully by their biographers. It is not as a critic nor as an historian that I have drawn these portraits of kings and com-

moners, of musicians and sculptors, of writers and scientists—it is as an artist.

Are they true portraits? No portrait in the world, whether painted on canvas, modeled in clay or wax, or chiseled in marble, is entirely true, for it always consists of two elements: the personality of the model and that of the artist. At times one of the two personalities dominates the other; the model may be so vivacious that it cannot be expressed, or so reserved that the artist cannot reach it.

I once saw the composer Vincent d'Indy sitting for Antoine Bourdelle in the great sculptor's studio in Paris. Bourdelle, who was seeking to reproduce d'Indy's personality, talked incessantly, trying to get different expressions on his face; while d'Indy, thinking that Bourdelle talked too much while he worked, and annoyed at being so continually stared at, looked irritable and displeased. The resulting portrait was a finished work of art, but the spark of life Bourdelle always sought was absent.

Auguste Rodin wanted to model Pope Benoit XV while he was in Rome. An admirer of his, an Italian musician who afterwards told me this story, spoke of him at the Vatican where his name was vaguely confused with Robin, a maker of pills. After endless trouble, Rodin got an audience and, whether from excitement or absent-mindedness, vigorously shook the hand of His Holiness instead of kissing the cross on his slipper. The Pope, naturally, was shocked, but he agreed to pose.

Rodin arrived with his modeling stand and clay, and the sittings began. The Pope did not appreciate Rodin's style; he found it rough and ugly; he showed his dissatisfaction and criticized the work aloud in Italian to his suite. Rodin suffered, but worked on. At the third sitting the Pope handed him a photograph of a portrait made by an insignificant painter, advised him to model the bust from the photograph, and refused to sit to him again.

Rodin, with tears of indignation and despair, told the Pope

that the reproduction of the painting was not worthy of His Holiness and left the Vatican deeply hurt.

This unfinished bust was later cast in bronze and can be seen in the Rodin Museum in Paris. The Pope's face is distorted and grim; but even so it is a marvelous piece of work.

An artist can reproduce only the face that is revealed to him. A Spanish opera singer once sat to me. Everyone knew her as gay, full of life, overflowing with high spirits; but she showed me another face. She told me about the tragic side of her life: about the man whom she loved and by whom she had been deserted; about her children from whom she was separated. People found her portrait interesting but lacking in resemblance. This sad woman was a stranger to them.

A human being has more than one face. We live, therefore we are always changing. We look different when we are with those we love and with those we dislike, different when we talk with children, different when we are suffering or unhappy. The task of portraiture is full of difficulties and problems. To achieve a true likeness, one must study one's model profoundly, devote a part of one's life to it, as Leonardo da Vinci did when painting the picture of the Mona Lisa. But sometimes even that does not give the desired results.

I knew a distinguished painter in Brussels, whose canvases are in many Belgian museums. Every day at the same hour, on the same seat in his studio, he painted his wife. He had been doing it for thirty-two years! He was never satisfied, always wishing to improve and perfect his subject, and the beautiful young wife had become old and gray, and still he went on working. What of the portrait? It changed every day, it kept pace with life, and only with the death of one of the two, artist or model, would the work end.

I have visited many countries, met many people, modeled hundreds of portraits. I have learned much and my life is the richer for those who have opened new horizons to me. Always a wanderer, I have passed through many countries and stayed

in none. Wherever I am, the beauties of other lands call me. In Stockholm I remember the lagoons of Venice, in Paris the sky line of New York, in London the shady gardens of the Palatine in Rome. I am everywhere and nowhere; but wherever I go I take with me the still unfinished portraits of hosts of people, some of which have been set down here.

CHAPTER TWO

A LEGEND IN WAX

PARIS. The spring of 1914. The air light and clear, flooded with golden sunlight, the noises of the town, exciting and joyous, the scent of violets, lilies of the valley, and narcissi sold at all the street corners, penetrating the air with their perfume.

Lines of automobiles and elaborate carriages moving along all the boulevards, over the spacious squares, through the streets and avenues. Women displaying their spring clothes. Paris in all its glory, Paris of 1914. No one rushed through the streets on business; one walked and drove without hurry, sauntering with no object save to see and be seen, to enjoy the air, to breathe, to be happy for no reason except that it was spring in all its wonder and freshness, the last spring before the world's catastrophe.

On such a day an artist, Alexandre Barjansky, a friend of d'Annunzio, brought me the following letter:

My dear friend,

Here are two cards for you and for the "Unknown." At the Sainte Chapelle of the Law Courts at half-past ten tomorrow morning, Monday. The concert will be marvelous in such a spot, anthems, responses, hymns, songs of the Crusades, etc.

Au revoir.

YOUR

GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO

A heavy note paper, a strange, large handwriting, full of character, and in the left corner a crest, surrounded by a laurel wreath engraved in red, *pér non dormire*.

"Who is the Unknown?" I asked.

"You. I have spoken to d'Annunzio about you and your art, and he wishes to know you."

An open carriage took us to the Chapel of the Law Courts, built by King Louis IX, one of the exquisite churches in the world. There was a dreadful crush, for all the literary and artistic world of Paris was there. Parisians are always avid of new sensations, and this concert in the wonderful old chapel was something unusual, and the music of the twelfth to the sixteenth century rarely heard.

People were growing tired of the Russian ballet, and the jazz revues had not yet appeared. Music like this had all the charm of novelty.

The doors were closed, and the church, with its many stained-glass windows, looked like a jewel box out of a fairy tale. In this setting we heard the choirs, simple, primitive melodies, like a painting by Giotto.

When the concert was over, the doors of the church were flung open, letting in the light, the air, and the noise of the town.

My companion, in a whisper, pointed out the people to me. "That is the celebrated Marquise Casati." (I saw a very tall and surprisingly slender woman with enormous eyes and red hair.) "That is Balby, editor in chief of the *Intransigeant*. That is Cécile Sorel. The little man is the poet André Germain, and—that is d'Annunzio with the Princesse de Polignac."

Three steps from me I saw a small, thin man with a strange face that looked as though it had been molded with yellow wax. There was not a single hair on his scalp, and his narrow face was accentuated and sharpened by a tiny, pointed beard. He approached with an odd dancing step, holding one shoulder slightly higher than the other, which made his body appear somewhat crooked. He was dressed too elegantly in a pale gray suit, an incredible necktie with a huge emerald, the same large stones in the cuffs of his silk shirt, patent leather shoes, and an eyeglass on a black cord.

He pressed my hand and his steel-gray eyes rested searchingly on me for a second. He alone had that singularly penetrating glance. I think in the course of a moment he received a full impression of a person and photographed him forever on his memory.

"So this is *L'Inconnue*," he said slowly. He squeezed my hand, and I felt the rings on his fingers. "I hope to see you again. Are you staying longer in Paris?" And he disappeared in the crowd.

2

A few days later I received through the same friend an invitation to a music party at d'Annunzio's: "I will send you my car, and I will await you until dawn."

At that time d'Annunzio was living at 44 Avenue Kléber in a furnished apartment on the fourth floor, where he spent the season. His home was in Arcachon. A black motorcar upholstered in pale gray cloth took me at nine in the evening to the Avenue Kléber.

My heart pounded as I rang the bell. A slender, fair, parlor-maid, wearing white gloves, opened the door. She made me think of a Swedish princess. A heavy perfume, a mixture of incense and amber, assailed me as I entered. D'Annunzio came forward and led me into a long, narrow room. On a broad couch of silver brocade, amongst a quantity of gold and black velvet cushions, sat a slim woman of remarkable beauty. She was a Russian, Madame G, then the *amie* of d'Annunzio. She had large, dark blue eyes that seemed to be veiled in tears. Her dress was very décolleté and she was covered with jewels.

There were some Parisian society people there, and also Madame X, in public life a successful actress, in private life the most celebrated courtesan of her day. Every heir to a throne was said to become initiated *dans le lit de Madame X*. She was too casual, too arrogant, she laughed too much and talked too loudly. She wore a dress of yellow brocade, with a long chain

of pearls hung from her shoulders to her knees; another, of even larger pearls, framed her face and was fastened at her temples to a tiara of diamonds. She repelled me, but Madame G was charming, erratic, simple, and not clever.

Another strange person was the versatile and talented Alastair, painter, poet, dancer, singer, and first-rate pianist. Also that friend of d'Annunzio, the Russian cellist, Alexandre Barjansky, whose wife I became a year later.

The room was lighted by many lamps, but the lamp shades were of heavy brocade, making a soft half-light. The walls were hung with Indian fabrics, straight folds from the ceiling. A round design repeated in the center of the fabric contained a circular mirror in a black frame, emphasizing the strangeness of the room. A large concert grand, many deep arm chairs, wonderful rugs, a collection of *objets d'art*, among them two vases filled with peacock feathers. Some one remarked to d'Annunzio that they brought bad luck.

"Not when there are 387 or 3087," he replied with the utmost gravity.

Splendid peaches and grapes were arranged in a dish of malachite standing on a low table.

"I always decorate my homes with these," said d'Annunzio. "I find these still-life effects as beautiful as flowers." But there were flowers, too, astounding flowers, white roses, yellow lotus flowers, all kinds of orchids. There were Buddhas and in one corner an open, low cupboard—"Ma bibliothèque des parfums," d'Annunzio called it—wherein he kept the celebrated *Mélanges de Parfum* that he made himself. The odor of *ambre antique* predominated. It was an intoxicating perfume and permeated one's clothing. I remember months later, taking out the dress I had worn that night and being astonished at finding the perfume of d'Annunzio's room still in it.

Alexandre Barjansky played the cello and Alastair accompanied him at the piano—Bach, Beethoven, Gluck. No one knew how to listen as d'Annunzio did. He sat, as though turned

to stone, an eyeglass screwed in his eye to increase its sight—he later lost it entirely—taking in the music with all the pores of his being. He seemed to be in an ecstasy of creation.

D'Annunzio was a well-known gourmet, and the supper was perfection. The climax was reached when the fruit was served—enormous peaches, apricots, apples, golden pears, purple plums, and bunches of blue, black, and pinkish grapes. The round table in the dining room was surrounded by a high golden screen. One saw nothing in the room but this golden wall, which gave back a strong reflection, and the table over which the light hung low—the rest was in deep shadow. In the middle of the table was a large black dish of white roses, and around it small black and white horses of Murano glass lifted their slender legs and delicate heads. Carafes of Murano contained an old and honey-colored wine that made the head spin. I saw the bare shoulders of the women, the sparkle of jewels, and in the center of all this the magician d'Annunzio, telling fantastic stories.

I was young and shy. All evening long I was lost in contemplation of this strange atmosphere. I barely opened my mouth, and as my youth and silence attracted attention, d'Annunzio called me "*la taciturne*."

Only once during the supper, as d'Annunzio finished an astonishing story, did I speak involuntarily. "Was that really true?" And d'Annunzio, enjoying my naïve question, replied: "Oh, no! Don't you know I am the greatest liar in the world? No one knows how to lie as I do!"

3

At that time I had an atelier in Munich and worked hard, living in a healthy and active atmosphere of study. I was modeling larger than life-size and was very dissatisfied. I felt that this work was unsuited to a woman as a means of self-expression. Everything I did seemed to me too masculine, and therefore false and untrue in feeling. I sought constantly after a way that

would be my own. Sometimes I painted, because sculpture left unfed my longing for color. I sought the possibility of introducing color in sculpture and did not know how to do it.

It was this search for inspiration that drove me to Paris where the new and fantastic world opened to me through d'Annunzio naturally fascinated me.

For days I wandered from one museum to another, visited all the exhibitions in the rue La Boétie and still found nothing. One morning I was in the Carnavalet Museum, and in a dark corner I saw two little statuettes in wax. They were ladies of the eighteenth century, dressed in silk and velvet, and slightly colored. They made a vivid impression on me. There was more of the eighteenth century in them than in all the painting and sculpture I had ever seen. This, perhaps, was the way to find a new mode of expression.

The following day I wrote to d'Annunzio and asked him to come to tea with me in the afternoon. He brought with him an interesting and talented American, Romaine Brooks, the painter. I received them in the yellow Empire drawing room of the little hotel where I was staying in the rue Daunou between the Avenue de l'Opéra and the rue de la Paix. It was a charming old French hotel, whose furnishings were authentic in the Empire period. It no longer exists, and the Théâtre Daunou now stands in its place.

Instinctively I tried to offset the artificiality of d'Annunzio's surroundings by great simplicity. I remember how it amused me to place a bouquet of blue cornflowers on the table, to open the windows wide and let in the clear bright daylight. Everything was simple and real. I was busy serving tea and did not have much opportunity to talk with d'Annunzio, but he was gay and amusing. When ice cream was served, he told us he had liked it so much in his youth in Rome that he would buy up all the ice cream that was left in the café Aragno late at night, at half-price, and share it with his friends.

A few days later, Romaine Brooks invited me to luncheon at her beautiful and original house near the Trocadéro. There

were only three colors prevailing: black, white, and silver-gray. All the flowers in the house were white. During the meal I sat beside d'Annunzio who began to tell me about "the lady of wax."

A beautiful woman wished to know how she really looked. She called a magician and ordered him to make her exact likeness. The magician modeled a form in wax, a living portrait of the beautiful woman, and colored it. The woman dressed her double in her clothes, and one could barely distinguish the wax figure from the living one. The woman admired her own beauty in the puppet and could not tear her eyes away from it. Soon she began to envy the puppet and from day to day she became paler and weaker, while the puppet acquired the lost coloring of the lovely lady. At last she became ill, for out of envy of the puppet she could no longer eat or drink; and the puppet grew more beautiful and radiant as the beauty of the woman passed into her.

The lady lay near death, gazing continually on her lost beauty. With an effort of her last breath she opened her eyes, looked at the puppet, and saw it beginning to smile because the life of the lady was entering it. And the lovely lady died, but her beauty, embodied in the puppet of wax, lived on.

This is only an outline of the tale, for d'Annunzio's art of telling a story was indescribable; he really hypnotized his hearers.

Opposite me sat a strange woman, the famous actress and dancer Ida Rubinstein. She had just been playing d'Annunzio's *St. Sébastien* to the music of Debussy, and Paris was talking about her "too slender form, her unequalled grace, her mysterious life." During the whole luncheon I gazed at this woman. Her body was quite Egyptian; her costume, created for her by Worth, a combination of black laces, velvet, and bird-of-paradise feathers. Her face was dead white and delicate, her black hair, her long gray eyes, and her red and expressive mouth showed an intense inner life. Her hands were slender and as though designed by the Italian Renaissance painter Crivelli. She belonged to art. She was art.

After I left the luncheon, I went from one shop to another in search of white wax. Somewhere near Notre Dame, in one of those little church shops where candles with roses painted on them, silver hearts, and wax crucifixes are sold, I found some wax with which it would be possible to model. For three days and nights, without interruption, I modeled my first figure in wax, the face from memory, an impression of Ida Rubinstein. I reproduced the delicate, sensitive face, the slender, beautiful body, and long, fine hands. I made a thronelike seat of brocade, and placed the little figure on it—her attitude Egyptian—draped her in black tulle and lace through which the body gleamed. I colored her eyes pale gray under black brows and lashes. Her mouth was a red wound. Her slender feet rested on a cushion of gold.

Curiously enough, I mastered this new technique at once. I worked out all the details, and when the figure was completed the new Ida Rubinstein was so lifelike that she seemed uncanny.

I telephoned d'Annunzio and begged him shyly to come and look at my work.

"I am coming at once," was the laconic answer.

I placed the statuette on the mantelpiece, and with a pounding heart awaited the poet. In a few minutes he came. I barely had time to greet him before he caught sight of the statuette, went to it, and gazed critically and searchingly. Those few minutes seemed an eternity. Then he looked at me as though seeing me for the first time and was silent. I stared at him, frightened.

"This is a great work of art. It is more than that. This work is magical! I have never seen anything like it in my life."

I was thunderstruck. "If you really find it so good, then take it. It is yours."

D'Annunzio seized my statuette and without another word carried it off. I looked out of the window and watched him get into his motorcar, the little wax lady in his hand, while a group of idlers formed around him, looking at it. D'Annunzio looked

up, caught sight of me, and cried gaily: "Your first success! My congratulations!"

The next morning he returned, and for the first time I really talked with him. He was serious and unaffected. I told him of my perplexities in art, and he was enthusiastic over my idea of modeling in wax.

"Why don't you reproduce in wax all the wonderful life material of our whole era? Begin with the Paris of today. I will introduce you to the most interesting circles. You must make portraits in wax of all the important people and of the beautiful women of our day. When you have a sufficient number of portraits, I will arrange an exhibition for you and write about your work in the *Figaro*."

CHAPTER THREE

BACKGROUND WITH FIGURES

So BEGAN a tremendously exciting time. Nearly every afternoon and evening d'Annunzio called for me and took me to parties of all kinds.

One evening I remember in particular. The car drove up to a villa in Passy. In the elevator I told the poet that I was frightened. "Always remember," said d'Annunzio seriously, "I too am terribly shy and have to make an effort when I am forced to go among people." I laughed at the idea that this man, sophisticated in the art of living, who played with people and their fates as though they were marionettes, could be shy.

We were ushered into a round hall, the floor covered with a black and white carpet looking like a chessboard. On the walls green parrots were painted. Some cages containing live parrots hung from the green ceiling. The lighting was dull yellow and gave the bird room a somber and ghostly effect. Then the doors opened, and we went into a large room so filled with smoke that at first I saw nothing at all. Although it was a warm summer evening, there was an open fire, its flames lighting up fantastic figures: some Hindus in native dress; a small, slight man with dreamy blue eyes in a bishop's robe of violet; a Pierrot in white silk and ostrich feathers; and, perched on a life-size unicorn of gilded bronze, a lovely, unreal woman in a dress consisting of pale pink veils.

It was so artificial and exaggerated that even d'Annunzio, the improviser of the unreal, rebelled, becoming almost rude. "Open the windows! We shall all die of smoke!" he exclaimed.

The pale lady on the bronze unicorn stretched out her arms. "Would you have me open the windows with the hands of a fairy princess?"

But d'Annunzio had already opened them himself, and he turned up the lights. The fairy princess of the unicorn was the hostess, Baroness Deslandes; the little bishop was the poet André Germain; the white Pierrot, Alastair; but the Indians were real and among them was the mystic, Innahat Khann, then a fashion with the ladies of Paris.

D'Annunzio as usual became the leading figure, the rest grouped about him while he invented fairy stories, one of them about the golden unicorn. The Hindus sang and accompanied themselves on their strange instruments. Later, Alastair played Bach, Scarlatti, and Debussy, and the fairy princess recited some poems. She was a writer who had produced some sentimental novels.

Before we left, the Baroness asked d'Annunzio to write a few words in her album, and showed us what Oscar Wilde had written: "Madame, I have observed you all evening and I admire your beauty." D'Annunzio put his monocle in his eye, looked at Wilde's large handwriting, which resembled his own, and said contemptuously, "*Quel poseur!*"

On another occasion, d'Annunzio took me to a party given by Valentine de Saint Point, the creator of metaphysical dances. There were hundreds of guests, modern musicians and artists, many of the women wearing *robes simultanées*, which had been designed by a Russian woman, the wife of the painter DeLaunay. They were a sort of Cubist drawing, of colored pieces of velvet and silk appliquéd on the dresses, which gave the women the appearance of living paintings.

Valentine de Saint Point and a number of her young disciples did some of the metaphysical dances with their heads veiled. An editor of a modern art magazine lectured on the Modern in life; the Spanish pianist, Ricardo Viñes, played Albeniz and Granados.

The room was lighted on one side in bright red, and on the

other in vivid green, which, together with the heat and the crowd, gave me such a headache that, when d'Annunzio found me again in the crowd he had pity on me and took me home.

While the Italian poet was introducing me to the fantastic and artificial world of French society as it flourished at that time, he was also revealing another phase of his own character. For d'Annunzio was not merely, as he called himself, *l'enfant de volupté*, he was primarily an artist. It is strange how often one finds in the genuinely great artists—whether their field is music or letters, painting or sculpture—what could almost be termed a split personality. On the one side there may be insincerity, frivolity, even a kind of corruption. But the artistic side maintains its integrity, its honesty, its passion for truth. In his devotion to art, d'Annunzio was honest, simple, and unswerving in his tireless effort to do good work.

I was constantly struck by his immense erudition and thorough knowledge of the art of all ages. He showed me the works of art he most loved in the various museums. Before a little Egyptian princess in the Louvre he made me stand for half an hour. In the great Greek hall there are two immense fountains. D'Annunzio showed me how, when one whispered into one, the voice was heard in the other, a more melodious and beautiful voice than the human one. And the poet told me stories, bent over one of these fountains, while I heard his warm, expressive voice issuing from the antique marble.

His beautiful friend Madame G lived in an old eighteenth-century farm where d'Annunzio kept his kennels, his racing hounds, eighty to a hundred of them. I was invited there once to supper. When I arrived I found d'Annunzio and the whole house in an uproar. Servants ran up and down the courtyard; d'Annunzio looked distracted; Madame G was giving orders in an agitated voice. There was an atmosphere of catastrophe.

"White Orris, the most valuable of my dogs, is having puppies sooner than we thought, a serious confinement." And d'Annunzio led me to the kennel where the dog lay on straw. The beautiful Madame G in evening dress, a handkerchief over her head like

a Russian peasant, lay down beside the suffering animal, whispering endearing words to quiet it. She made furious signs to us to go away and not frighten the animal.

Other guests arrived, and it became apparent that nothing had been prepared for them, nothing cooked for supper. The confinement of White Orris had made all the household crazy. D'Annunzio took us in his car to a restaurant a half-hour's drive from the farm. In an arbor a table was laid for us, and d'Annunzio himself went into the kitchen to "inspire" the cook. The sunset was glorious, our host charming.

The subject of heroism came up. D'Annunzio told us that Balzac, who always wrote at night until sunrise, once finished a novel on which he had worked for years. He looked at his clock; it was four in the morning. Still an hour before dawn. He took a fresh sheet and began the outline of a new book. "That, to my mind, is heroism," said d'Annunzio.

When the moon rose, we returned to the farm, but the dog was still in the same state, and we all drove back to Paris through the Bois de Boulogne. On the way d'Annunzio told us how the thief of the Mona Lisa, whom he called *il sublime ladro*, had "naturally" brought the picture to him and how he had made magic the whole night long, until, through his wizard's craft, he had made Mona Lisa come out of her frame and talk to him.

"What was she like?" I asked.

"She is a little bourgeoisie," he said. "You will understand this yourself tomorrow when in the Louvre I show you her hands, thick, bourgeois hands."

2

"Tomorrow," said d'Annunzio's voice on the telephone, "you will see one whom you must immortalize in wax. You are invited to a dinner at the Marquise Louisa Casati's."

The next day I saw a woman who was more a work of art than a human being. She was even more slender than Ida Rubinstein, but she had marvelous shoulders, a wonderful bust,

small hands and feet, and the springy step of a Russian wolfhound. In her narrow face glowed enormous black eyes, whose expression changed constantly, sometimes dull, sometimes full of fire. Her nose was thin with wide nostrils, which trembled nervously like those of a race horse. Her mouth was rather large with strong, healthy teeth. Her flowing hair hung in curls to her shoulders and was nearly scarlet in color. Her dresses were designed by Léon Bakst and made by Poiret.

That evening she wore long Persian trousers of heavy gold brocade, fastened tightly around her slim ankles and held by diamond bangles of fine workmanship. Her feet were encased in gold sandals with high diamond heels. Her deep décolleté ended where her gold-draped sash began, her beautifully chiseled breasts were veiled with valuable laces. On her shoulders was a short cape of powder-blue velvet with chinchilla on the collar and on the short, flowing sleeves. Huge pearls were in her ears. An immensely large black pearl on one hand, an equally large white one on the other. A string of pearls encircled her slender neck several times. Her fingers played nervously with the long hair of a jet-black Russian borzoi, lying at her feet, while a white one was stretched by the fire. She smoked cigarettes out of a long black mouthpiece studded with diamonds.

She was an apparition out of the *Thousand and One Nights*, but, curiously enough, she did not look unnatural. The fantastic garb really suited her. She was so different from other women that ordinary clothes were impossible for her.

The drawing room of her suite at the Ritz had been transformed by her *bibelots*. Precious stuffs and leopard and tiger skins covered all the chairs and sofas. Jeweled cigarette and watch boxes, ash trays of gold and jade lay around as in Cartier's shop.

On a table stood a gold cage containing a little mechanical bird whose outspread wings was studded with precious stones. The two borzois and the little bird once caused her a rather embarrassing situation. A painter who was very much the fashion had hoped that she would buy one of his pictures or sit for her

portrait. (Everyone painted her; there was always a sculpture or a painting of her in the international exhibition every year in Venice. She had been painted by Boldini, modeled by Prince Paul Troubetskoi and many others.)

She visited the artist's studio, looked at everything and bought nothing. Later he heard that she was criticizing his work severely. Thereupon, in the windows of one of the biggest art dealers of the boulevards, appeared a large painting of a naked woman with two borzois and a little colored bird in a gold cage. It was modern work and had no special resemblance. But the nude figure was slender, the hair was red, one borzoi was black (a great rarity) and the other white. Everyone recognized the Marquise Casati, and the only way to take the picture out of the window was to buy it, which the Marquise, in spite of the exorbitant price, did to her extreme annoyance.

The Marquise was my second portrait in wax. I spent days with her, her drawing room at the Ritz looked like a workshop with bits of wax, wire, clippings of brocade, laces, and colors—everything I needed to produce a second Marquise Casati—scattered about.

She took a lively interest in the creation of her double. D'Annunzio often came to see the work advance. When the portrait was nearly finished, the Marquise wanted everything on the little figure to be as valuable as possible. The lace must be old and rare; the jewels must be real. She would go about Paris several times a day in her Rolls Royce to find the necessary articles.

It was a new toy, a purpose in life for a few days or weeks. She wanted me continually with her. It was her habit to occupy herself entirely with people until she had drawn from them all that was unusual and interesting and then to drop them entirely. When in later meetings with her in other countries I asked about the friends whom I had seen with her, she would dismiss them with a shrug. Their day was over. But she had great charm, much imagination, and regarded the world in an amusing and original manner. It was never dull where she was.

She had an artistic temperament, but being unable to express herself in any branch of art, she made an art of herself. Because she possessed no inner life nor any power of concentration, she sought wild ideas in her external life. For example, she gave a fete in Venice where she appeared dressed as a *dogaresa*, with two young leopards on a gold chain. She looked like a sixteenth century picture—but the leopards, annoyed by the lights, colors, and people, began to prowl, and the frightened guests departed in haste, leaving the *dogaresa* alone with her leopards.

In Rome she gave a fete where the train of her dress was carried by two naked "slaves" entirely gilded. She once went to a party with a headdress made of a white peacock tail, kneeling in her car because of the height of the peacock's spread tail. She wore a tight white satin dress with a long train and the yard-high peacock's fan of feathers on her head blazed with diamonds.

3

At last the little wax Marquise was finished, but by that time the world had changed for the living Marquise. The war had come. There were soldiers and uniforms everywhere in Paris. Most of the hotels were without a staff, for almost all the helping hands had been German. At the Ritz I found the Marquise Casati screaming hysterically. She rang all the bells, demanding breakfast at four o'clock in the afternoon, and no one came. Her red hair was wild. In her Bakst-Poiret dress she suddenly looked like an evil and helpless fury, as useless and lost in this new life as the little lady in wax. War had touched the roots of life. Art was no longer necessary.

The Baroness Deslandes looked fearfully at d'Annunzio through her gold lorgnette. "*Croyez-vous vraiment que les Allemands entreront à Paris et vont violer toutes les femmes?*"

D'Annunzio, with a twinkle in his eyes answered, "Madame, you ask too much!"

Alastair packed up his useless Pierrot costume, his drawings, poems, and music and set out for Zurich with André Germain. Alexandre Barjansky had just returned from a concert tour in Germany and related how he had to cross the frontier on foot, carrying his cello and trunk. The first German airplanes appeared and bombed Paris every afternoon at three o'clock. Panic grêw; the horrors of war began. Hospitals were opened; automobiles were commandeered.

Comfort and luxury disappeared. One saw a spy in everybody; people became suspicious of one another. D'Annunzio, walking by moonlight near Notre Dame, wrote something in his notebook; a policeman saw it and invited the poet to follow him to the police station. D'Annunzio tried to draw his attention to the beauty of the Gothic lines of Notre Dame by moonlight, but the policeman, delighted to have found a spy, was not impressed. D'Annunzio was dismissed with many apologies at the station as soon as he gave his name.

I lived in an evil dream. I loved France, but I also loved Germany, Bavaria, Munich where I had spent my youth. I did not know what to do. I dared not go to Munich where my belongings were; I could not go to Russia where my parents were. So I stayed in Paris and dreamed of the Swiss heights, far from the hatred of men.

In the shop windows hung maps on which little flags, French and German, were pinned, showing the movements of the armies. Every day the German flags came nearer. At the end of August, Georges Clemenceau's famous article appeared in his *L'Homme Enchaîné*, revealing the lies in the newspapers about the French victories and telling the people the truth.

"The Germans are thirty kilometers from Paris . . . the danger of their entry is imminent. All men should at once be mobilized to defend Paris. Women should be sent away."

That was a dreadful blow for those who had remained optimistic. An exodus from Paris took place. Thousands of people camped in the railway stations, waiting to get tickets for their journey.

A friend, who had two tickets for Switzerland, suddenly decided to leave by car, and gave one of them to me and the other to the Russian cellist, Alexandre Barjansky.

I saw d'Annunzio for the last time on the eve of my departure. He tried to convince me that we were living in a most interesting period and that we were fortunate to witness a great historic change.

"Are you staying in Paris?" I asked him.

"Oh, yes, I have had my cellar papered and furnished to live there in case of any more bomb throwing."

"But if the Germans really occupy Paris, what will you do?"

"But," the poet replied, "what could the Germans do to *me*? I am d'Annunzio!"

CHAPTER FOUR

SHADOWS—AND LIGHT

NOBODY knew where the train was going. Some said directly to Marseilles, others thought to Lyons—but no one cared. All they wanted was to be as far as possible from Paris, for the Germans were coming nearer and nearer.

There were no train conductors, no porters. Only soldiers—soldiers everywhere—and women whose faces were haggard with fear. It was difficult to realize that only a few days before these men and women had been absorbed in the minor problems of their quiet homes, their private lives. All that was over for them, gone as though it had never been.

It was 1914, and we were on our way to Switzerland, Alexandre Barjansky and I, with tickets that had been given to us. It was only seven o'clock in the morning, but already the station was packed with people. Some of them had been standing in line and sleeping in the street for forty-eight hours or more to get tickets—somewhere, anywhere—it did not matter, so long as it was away from the terror.

At length we found two seats in a third-class carriage for both first and second class had disappeared. Instead of the customary eight persons, there were eleven of us. And a baby. And Barjansky's cello. We could not place it on the luggage racks, already stacked high with the pathetic objects salvaged by these people in escaping from their homes. Finally we wedged it between us. There were protests from the passengers, who demanded that it be placed in the baggage car, which under these circumstances would have meant the last of the irreplaceable instrument.

Fortunately, Barjansky had received from the Russian Embassy an official paper stating he was a celebrated Russian cellist and that he had with him a priceless instrument. The Czar's government asked that he be shown every consideration. This document had large wax seals with a double-headed Russian eagle and was so impressive that when he displayed it the protests were silenced and the cello remained in our compartment.

After two hours of waiting and uncertainty in the station, the train began to move. But never for long. It stopped in little stations. Sometimes it stopped in the fields. Sometimes it just stopped. Dusk came, night closed in around us, and still the four-hour run to Lyons had not been made.

Eleven people, tired, nervous, irritable, and almost hysterical, were packed close together. And the baby cried. We were all hungry. There was no dining car, and no one dared get out at a station in search of food because there was no way of telling whether the train would stop for three minutes or for an hour.

Only Barjansky remained serenely detached from the confusion, the turmoil, the fears, and the jangled nerves. At that time he was interested in problems of harmony, and he bent intently over a book, working these out on the margin. I looked through the window at the landscape, beautiful and peaceful in the moonlight, and thought that scenery very like this, under the same moon, was covered with the dead and the wounded only a short distance away, northwest of Paris.

I thought, too, how odd it was that I should be traveling with the famous Russian cellist. I had met him first in Munich at a pension where I had gone to lunch with an old friend. She was not there when I arrived, but a tall, slender man with light brown hair worn very long, gray-green eyes, and an artist's face, rose and said in Russian, "I know you."

He looked like an unreal person. Perhaps Chopin looked a little like that. His profile was not unlike Wagner's. He talked very loud, and he made big gestures with his long hands. He was always restless. Even in that first meeting I recognized that he was incredibly sincere. For most of us the good and bad

are mixed like coffee and cream. For him they were separate. He could never learn to compromise. He overdid both his admiration and his hatred. He was an idealist, violently defending everything in which he believed, if he thought it unjustly treated. At the same time he was almost childish in his utter goodness, his inexhaustible kindness. You could not help being charmed by him.

It was noon the next day when we finally reached Lyons, after twenty-seven hours in the crowded carriage, making a four-hour trip. During all that time I had not been able to budge because of the cello, and my feet were so swollen that I could hardly stand.

We were told that a train for Geneva was waiting on the other platform, and we stumbled toward it. Barjansky had put away his harmony problems, had come out of his abstraction, and was madly turning out all his pockets.

"What is wrong?" I asked, half-dazed with fatigue.

"My passport! I've lost my passport!"

This was no inconvenience; it was disaster. I dropped my suitcase and sank down on it, dumb with horror. In a frenzy of consternation and rage, the cellist went through his pockets again, seized the big important document that he had received from the Russian Embassy, and tore it to bits.

There was no use telling him the document might have replaced his passport. I could only moan. Then I got off my suitcase and stood up. There was nothing to do but go in search of the lost passport. Without it Barjansky could not continue the journey and enter Switzerland. I had seen the passport myself. He had taken it from his pocket several times when he had looked for paper on which to do his harmony problems.

He ran back to the train that we had just left with such relief. It was still standing there, and our fellow passengers told him that a woman had found the passport. What woman, they could not say. Where was she going, they did not know.

The station master was in military uniform and surrounded by officers. He listened to Barjansky, looking at him searchingly.

So did the others. A foreigner without a passport, in wartime—probably a spy. That was written on their faces. It takes war psychology so short a time to develop.

Would the station master telephone to Paris, to the Russian Embassy? The station master would not. The Russian Embassy was on its way to Orléans. With some irony, the station master suggested that we visit the Russian Consulate in Lyons. So, leaving the cello and our luggage with him, we went into the town.

The streets were sad and empty, the trolley cars empty. It seemed as though we had been plunged suddenly into a desert. The consulate was closed, and no one knew where the consul had gone or whether he would return. Barjansky begged me to continue my journey alone to Switzerland, but I did not want to do that until the passport had been found. We decided to go to the police and ask for advice.

The men at the police station also found the story of the lost passport suspicious. No one believed Barjansky. We were at our wits' end. By this time it was late afternoon, and we had eaten nothing since the early morning before in Paris. We sat dejectedly in the restaurant, and the tears streamed down my face and fell in my soup. But Barjansky, whose mood had changed again, laughed, made jokes, and scribbled his eternal harmony problems on the menu and the napkins.

Back in the railway station we learned to our joy that the passport had been found. Half-torn, dirty, it was still his passport. He was no longer a spy, no longer under suspicion. Barjansky shook hands with the station master who congratulated him. It was a miracle, he said, in the chaotic state of the railway station, with fugitives and military transports arriving continually from Paris, for it to have reappeared.

"What is happening is enough to drive one mad," he confessed. "I did not for a moment believe your tale about the passport. It would have been awkward for you if it had not been found."

We were very gay as we started for Switzerland. Barjansky

even forgot his harmony problems and discovered that I looked young and pretty. The war seemed far away. And soon on the deck of a little white steamer we watched a wonderful sunset over Lac Léman. Everything was so quiet and peaceful it was hard to remember that nearly all the rest of Europe was at war, destroying itself.

That evening we arrived in Lausanne where I took a room in a small hotel while Barjansky left for Zurich to meet his mother and sister.

A few weeks later he returned. We took a long, long walk by the lake in Ouchy, the lower part of Lausanne, and decided to continue our lives together. And some days later a stout and funny personage in a top hat informed me, after a brief ceremony in the Town Hall in Lausanne, that I was now Madame Alexandre Barjansky.

2

Being married to Alexandre Barjansky was a kind of emotional bigamy, for I was really dealing with two people. One of them was all gentleness, tenderness, goodness, nobility. The other was a fury, a wild and belligerent individual who was on tenterhooks to attack everything and everyone. The changes came so rapidly that it was impossible to foresee them or to be prepared for them.

Life was difficult for him because he hated injustice, hypocrisy, lies. As soon as he found any of these qualities in the people who surrounded him, he cast them off. In time he grew to dislike all the people who could be useful to him, and he lived in the utmost loneliness except in his own home where, though I did not agree with all his opinions, at least I understood them.

He hated money and wealth. With equal extravagance he loved music and my sculptures. I think he liked anyone who was in need. There was a time when he forced a shabbily dressed man, sitting in a wheel chair on the street, to accept some money. The man protested, but Alexandre refused to hear

his protests. Later we learned, to our great amusement, that the man was extremely wealthy and was the owner of a large amount of real estate.

Sometimes I would say: "It is very difficult for me. How can I pay this bill?"

"But, my dear, the birds in the tree and the lilies in the field do not need money." The exasperating thing was that he really meant it. He was incapable of posing.

Often I would return from one of my exhibitions and tell him of the sculptures I had sold.

"But why must you sell?" he would demand. "What can you buy better than you sell?" And he was not to be consoled until I had made a duplicate of the sculpture I had sold for him.

He was profoundly modest about his own playing and never satisfied with what he did. After every concert he would say to me: "It was terrible. I am sure it was terrible." He was as exhausted as though he had given a little piece of his own life to his playing. He drew a magnificently sonorous tone from his cello, but at times his nervousness made his playing uneven. One night when we were traveling in Switzerland, he was unable to feel any rapport with his audience, and he played indifferently. In the middle of the concert he glanced down and saw an old man listening to him in absorption and delight. The rest of the program he played divinely for the old man.

Once he stopped at a new and very beautiful hotel. Alexandre took his cello out of its case and put it on the bed, went into the bathroom to turn on the water in the tub and then downstairs to get a newspaper. An item caught his eye, and he wandered into the reading room where he went through the whole newspaper. Some time later he started upstairs. The corridor outside his room was filled with excited people, the door was open, and the room was flooded. All the electricity for the hotel was out of order. Alexandre, with a cry, rushed into the room, found his cello safe and dry on the bed, and came out again beaming. Why was everyone so excited? His cello was unharmed!

He was governed entirely by his moods. There was a musician in Germany whom, for some reason, he was determined to hate. He would cross the street rather than speak to him. One evening we were sitting on the terrace of a café in Egypt when the man walked in. Alexandre enthusiastically hailed him, asked him to join us, and we spent a delightful evening together.

He lived, I have always believed, in a remote world of his own creation, and he was blandly unconscious of the things and the people that did not interest him. If he wanted to play in the middle of the night he would do so, and we were always being complained about by our neighbors. Sometimes, when people came to see us, he would say, "Tell them I am not at home." In a few minutes he would forget that he was not supposed to be there and begin to play loudly in his room.

Once in Sweden a dinner party was given for us. "My dear," I told him, "we must leave in twenty minutes."

"No, I must practice for another half-hour. Then I will shave and dress."

"But we cannot be an hour and a half late for dinner."

"Well, go alone. Say I am ill."

I invented a story about a sudden illness. Before the end of the dinner party, my husband arrived, smiling and charming.

It was a curious thing that for all his indifference to practical matters, he was an astute and farseeing judge of politics. And while many of our artistic friends scoffed at his ideas, which were diametrically opposed to those of the vast majority, such men as Count Sforza listened to them seriously. Even in the days when Mussolini was heralded, not only in Italy but by the Conservatives of England, as a great leader, Alexandre fulminated against him. And from the very beginning he regarded the rising star of Hitler as a menace to the world. I remember how he antagonized a group of people in Belgium by shouting: "He will come here, I tell you! Here!"

My life with Alexandre was filled with surprises, but it was always interesting. After our marriage we took a small furnished apartment with windows opening on the lake, and led a very

quiet life, absorbed in our arts, music and sculpture, and in each other. Alexandre met some musicians and I modeled to a musical background of quartets by Mozart, Beethoven, Debussy. Those were the happiest and most peaceful days of my life, filled with music, art, and great love. We were indescribably happy.

And then my husband put an announcement in the newspaper that he was in Lausanne and would accept some pupils. No pupils came, but instead he received a wire from Geneva signed "Lady in Waiting, Comtesse de la Tour." "Her Majesty, the Queen of Naples," read the message, "invites Mr. Barjansky to luncheon."

CHAPTER FIVE

A PHANTOM QUEEN AND A TORRENT OF MUSIC

"HER Majesty the Queen will appear in a few minutes," whispered the Comtesse de la Tour, lady in waiting to the Queen of Naples.

How strange those words sounded in that conventional living room in the little hotel in Geneva! For the Queen of whom the little white-haired lady in waiting spoke with such ceremony had lost her throne fifty years before. Few people even remembered the Kingdom of Naples. The very existence of this woman was an historical anachronism. But not to the Comtesse de la Tour who, by a personal act of faith, managed to turn an ordinary hotel suite into a royal palace.

Never having met a queen before, I did not know how to behave nor what was expected of me. And this queen, even in exile, perhaps because of her exile, was punctilious about etiquette.

On the journey from Lausanne I had bombarded my husband with questions. What was she like? She was a very unusual woman, he said. She would interest me. He had met her first in Paris, where she had a charming house and occasionally received artists, among them Caruso who was a great friend of hers. Even there, Alexandre said, where she could walk unknown through the streets, she lived as though she were surrounded by high walls, remote from the world, untouchable. Several months of each year she spent in Munich because the Prince-Regent of Bavaria was a relative of hers. At that time, King Otto of Bavaria was in a sanitarium.

The door opened. The ghost of a woman stood there for a moment and then came forward swiftly. She was very tall, with a face as narrow as a knife blade; a body as thin, as narrow, as unsubstantial as a shadow. It was the body of a skeleton. She wore a long simple black dress with a high collar, her long neck swathed in tulle, under which gleamed a necklace of huge pearls. Her hands were almost transparent, with incredibly long fingers.

Her eyes were pale blue and seemed to give out a blue light. Her nose was thin and long, her lips thin and expressive. Her hair was white with two heavy braids, which, surprisingly enough, were almost black, wrapped around her head, forming a sort of crown over her high forehead.

She smiled, and the severe expression of her face altered, became softer, and even kind in a detached way. She gave me her long pale hand, and for the first time in my life I made a deep curtsy. My husband bowed and kissed her hand, and she seated herself, very erect, not touching the back of her chair. She sat on the ordinary hotel chair as though she were on a throne, and held her head as though her black braids were really a royal crown. It was an imaginary crown, but one of which she was conscious every moment of her life.

All that afternoon we sat in the little hotel room, while she carried on a conversation with my husband, and I, aside from answering an occasional question, was silent and studied her. She was gracious and kind, but she was a phantom woman on a cloud, remote from the rest of humanity. She was a being from the past, a ghost, a queen from a fairy tale in which none but she believed. She went through life holding high her head with its imaginary crown and conscious of an enormous distance between her and ordinary people, because she was not real.

Since then I have met other crowned heads in Europe; but always, when I think of a queen, it is of the Queen of Naples who lived for fifty years in exile, without a throne, without a country, with nothing but a dream to comfort her.

At length I gathered together my courage and asked whether she would let me bring some wax and do her portrait.

"Oh, yes," she said readily. "The Comtesse will write to you."

A few days later my husband and I received a letter from the Comtesse de la Tour, inviting us to accompany the Queen of Naples to a concert in Geneva and to dine with her. When we reached the hotel lobby the Comtesse was waiting for us.

"The Queen will come in a moment," she announced, and she hurried away. The Comtesse too lived in a phantom kingdom, and the etiquette of a court was part of the fabric of her life.

In a little while the lady in waiting returned with the Queen, the little white-haired Comtesse pattering along with fast steps, struggling to keep up with the long swift pace of the Queen. The latter was dressed as inconspicuously as though she wished to be invisible, in a long black coat, black hat, and black veil. She passed through the lobby like a breeze, a little breath of cold air, and yet eyes followed her as she went because she was so unlike anyone else.

In a dark automobile driven by an old chauffeur, we went to the concert hall. That was a strange concert, for most of the musicians were busy making war instead of making music, and the orchestra had been scrambled together haphazardly. Few of the players were professional musicians; they were unaccustomed to ensemble playing, and they had been inadequately rehearsed. Yet the conductor, though he was manifestly dissatisfied with the result, drew some wonderful phrases from them. He was, we learned from the program, the great musician and composer, Ernest Bloch.

The Queen, stiff and erect—it was impossible to imagine that emaciated body at rest—listened to the music with closed eyes. And when the concert was over, she hastened through the hall like drifting smoke and into a side street where her motorcar was waiting.

Dinner was served in the small dining room of her suite. While

we waited to be summoned, the Comtesse told us that the Queen was accustomed to dining early because she ate only one meal a day. The routine of her life, like everything about her, was strange. Every morning, regardless of the weather, she went out at eight o'clock and for two hours walked swiftly through the streets. Geneva is famous for its disagreeable and severe winds, but they never prevented the Queen from taking her outing. It was almost as though she disregarded the weather, as she did mankind, as unworthy of her notice.

When she returned to her hotel she ate some ice cream. Between three and four in the afternoon a large dinner was served, and again from six to eight in the evening she sped through the streets, as though in swift pursuit of a mirage, the ghost of a queen moving unseen by the people of Geneva. At eight o'clock she ate more ice cream and so ended her curious day.

That day at dinner she sat between my husband and me. The only other people present were her lady in waiting and Mr. Tramontana, her court gentleman, a Neapolitan. These two people had left Naples with her at the time of her exile and had spent their whole lives in her service, creating by their devotion and their sacrifice a phantom kingdom in which the Queen could live.

It was amusing to see what quantities of food this shadow of a woman could consume: soup, steak, vegetables, dessert, coffee. There was comedy in the stately meal and the voracious appetite.

And after dinner I began the wax portrait. She is imprisoned there in wax, the Queen of Naples, with her stiff back; her austere black dress; her long and ghostly hands that will not let go their tenacious hold of what is hers; the narrow feet resting so lightly on a gold-and-black cushion; the strange blue eyes and aristocratic nose; the bitter mouth with its narrow lips; the high forehead with its black braids and imaginary crown.

I did the sculpture with fabrics. The figure sits on an arm chair that looks like a throne, its color a faded red and gold. I covered the body with black velvet and tulle. The background

is an old brocade of gray and gold. The face broods, the bitter mouth is unreconciled.

While the wax portrait was gradually taking shape under my fingers, I thought of the extraordinary fate that had been the lot of so many of that Bavarian house of Wittelsbach. As the waxen Queen of Naples took on life and resemblance, I studied my sitter whose kingdom had not existed since Garibaldi united Italy under the house of Savoy, which she hated with a deep, corroding hatred. I thought how strange it was that this hotel, where she had elected to live out her exile, was directly opposite the spot where, years before, her sister Elizabeth had been staying at the time of her death. It was as difficult for me to imagine the radiant Elizabeth of Bavaria, wife of Francis Joseph, becoming old, as it was to picture this gaunt woman as young and lovely. Yet lovely she had been, for many men had loved her. Young too. For she was only nineteen when she had her brief moment of authentic glory. One would think she might, even then, have been somewhat disillusioned with kingdoms, married as she was to a man so ugly that no one ever dared to take his photograph, a King who, in the face of revolt, cravenly took himself off to Rome. But the young Queen Maria of Naples had appeared on the barricades and stood all day long, in the face of whining bullets, encouraging the soldiers, urging them on by her presence.

Modeling the thin lips, that bitter mouth, sterile, devoid of all passion, one could not help wondering how much of that stormy past she remembered and what meaning it had for her now.

These Wittelsbachs certainly were destined to lead violent lives. Empress Elizabeth of Austria had died at the hand of an assassin, and her only son had been a suicide. Another sister, the Duchess Sophie of Alençon, was at one time betrothed to Ludwig, the eccentric King of Bavaria. She was later burned to death in a fire at a charity bazaar.

Each time I came to work on the wax portrait, my husband

accompanied me. And on one of these occasions we took part in the Queen's evening walk. On our return to the hotel we found two Neapolitans waiting for her at the door. "Long live the Queen!" they shouted lustily. On the long pale face appeared the rare smile that made her nearly human. She extended her hands to the man and woman, who bowed and kissed them. "Long live the Queen!" they shouted again. She smiled once more, entered the hotel and disappeared in the cage of the elevator.

Later I took the wax portrait with me to Rome, where I finished it and so, although in wax, she came again to Italy, which she loved and still regarded as a possession, a piece of property wrongfully snatched from her grasp. She was seventy-four at the time I met her, and after leaving Switzerland I was never to see her again—and never to forget her. With her I experienced, as I later did in Egypt, the curious feeling of living in today yet being able to reach out and touch the past.

2

It was at the concert we attended with the Queen of Naples that my husband and I first saw Ernest Bloch. His reputation and his music were known to us, and we watched him with great interest, observing the broad, sure, powerful movements with which he compelled the inadequate orchestra to do his will. I studied his face, which was truly inspired, the forehead broad, the eyes blue. The upper part of his face was spiritual, his mouth and nose sensual. He was not tall, and his shoulders were broad. One was aware that here was a man of great power.

Shortly after the concert, we met Bloch at the house of a celebrated pianist in Geneva. Now the sense of power was overwhelming. He was a man of tremendous force, exuberant, vital, in a perfect whirlpool of emotions. His blue eyes had something of the look of Goethe's, and as he talked, pouring out a torrent of words, his great forehead seemed to be in flames.

Like my husband, he was a man of extremes, wildly enthusias-

tic or violently disapproving. He was never indifferent. But while Alexandre was eternally dissatisfied with his own playing, always aspiring to something more, something better, Bloch felt convinced that he was not appreciated. Never have I been more conscious of the presence of creation than I was when with Bloch. One felt that the creation of music was almost a physical process, a convulsion like the breaking off of icebergs from a glacier. He was exciting to be with, and intensely stimulating.

That first evening Bloch's words poured forth like an avalanche. He was misunderstood by the mob. He was a victim of all humankind. People were unjust to his music. Some part of this attitude, I think, may be explained by the fact that he was conscious of his Jewish origin for, even in those days, anti-semitism was rife in Europe. Later on, I remember his charming son coming into the room bewildered by something that had happened at school. An acquaintance had hurled at him the stupid words, "Dirty Jew!"

"Jew, yes, but dirty, no," he had replied with dignity. "I take a bath every morning."

Bloch's wife was, in some ways, his more materialistic double. Like the wife of every genius, she had a difficult life, mitigated in her case by the fact that she was profoundly in love with her husband.

While Alexandre listened and I observed, Bloch talked on and on. Life was going by, and he was left behind. All his creative power was for nothing, falling like dust before people who could not understand it. The fact that he already had a great reputation did not satisfy him. Perhaps a truly great creator can never be satisfied.

We soon discovered that to utter the simplest greeting was like tapping a dike. There was the day, for instance, when a man who barely knew Bloch greeted him on the street with the casual words, "How are you?"

It was nearly an hour later before the composer had finished describing minutely the agonies of a sleepless night, an intolerable headache, and all the attendant discomforts. The discomfited

stranger turned to Mrs. Bloch, stout, Germanic, old-fashioned, her hair coiled in a big bun on her head. "What a pity!" he said politely.

"Alas, yes!" she replied with a deep sigh, and launched into a perfect counterpoint on the original theme.

It was late the night of our first meeting, after two o'clock in the morning, that the party broke up. Bloch accompanied us, and we walked along the dark streets of Geneva, with Bloch talking, talking. We found at length that we had reached his house.

"Come in, come in," he insisted. "Come upstairs. I will play you some of my compositions."

We were delighted and followed him upstairs into a big, comfortable room, with a piano, many books, easy-chairs, and a huge amount of music. On the wall hung a beautiful crucifix, a gift from Robert Godet, a Swiss who had been Claude Debussy's most intimate friend. He had given it to Bloch to see the reaction of a Jew. Bloch promptly hung it over the piano and, as he played, admired the beauty of the medieval sculpture.

Sitting at his piano, he played and sang his psalms from the Bible. Into the quiet night poured the haunting, plaintive strains of *Elohim, pourquoi m'a-tu abandonné?*

It was four o'clock in the morning when we left him. Words were impossible for me. I could find no way to express the jumble of emotions and images that flooded my mind. "I will thank you in my sculpture," I said.

All the rest of that night I worked, modeling, trying to express the impression of Ernest Bloch's beautiful and tragic music. It was a figure of King Solomon that emerged in the wax, taking shape from the music of Bloch. It was the same technique with which I had done the portrait of the Queen of Naples. Again I used fabrics as colors. The forehead of my king was high, his nose long, the eyes black and deep-set. I gave him a long, narrow beard, an expressive mouth. His hands rested on the arms of a thronelike seat, one hand clenched to represent

the power of the earth, the other relaxed to symbolize "All is vanity." The long fingers were inspired by El Greco.

And then one day the doorbell rang, and Bloch came in. He stood for a moment looking at my King Solomon.

"Here," I said. "This is my impression of the psalms you played for us."

His face lighted up. "Now I know what I will write," he exclaimed.

And so it happened that Bloch began to compose the rhapsody for cello and orchestra that he called in Hebrew "Schelomo," one part inspired by the clenched hand of the waxen king, the other by the words, "All is vanity." He dedicated the work to my husband and to me. He loved my husband's playing, the richness of the tone, and the enormous passion that corresponded so well with his own nature.

Those were inspiring days. Every afternoon at three Bloch would appear in his dark overcoat and his big brown plush hat. "My dear Alexandre," he would begin eagerly, "I have done a few more pages. Let us try it." And my husband would play what had been composed in the night. Within a few months the work was completed and the manuscript for the piano score was given to us. Later Mengelberg gave the work its first performance.

It is odd that this rhapsody, perhaps Bloch's most characteristic work, and superbly adapted to my husband's passionate playing, was performed only once by Bloch and Barjansky together, though it has, of course, been played on many occasions, by many cellists. This concert was in Rome in 1933 in that curious and majestic concert hall made from the tomb of Augustus. I was in Brussels at the time, but I heard the concert over the radio. The playing of the rhapsody was followed by tumultuous applause.

The next morning I received a telegram from Mrs. Bloch saying, "*Grand enorme succès pour Schelomo et son père.*" Later I heard that a storm of applause broke out after the play-

ing of the rhapsody. My husband bowed deeply to Bloch, who was conducting, and left the stage to indicate that the applause properly belonged to the composer. When Bloch brought Alexandre out there was a great ovation.

In time, of course, we left Geneva for Rome, because we were always moving on, without roots. And a correspondence began between us, Bloch's letters always full of *weltschmerz*. He came to America and his moods rose and fell. Some letters were outpourings of enthusiasm for the United States. Others were filled with disappointment and frustration. His works, he felt, were played too rarely, although he acquired a great reputation in America, and his work was known and appreciated by a vast number of people.

In 1932 we were in Switzerland again and spent a week with Bloch and his wife. As usual Bloch talked incessantly, and as usual he was extremely interesting and stimulating. We scarcely uttered a word all the week. On the last day he took us to the station.

Suddenly he asked: "Where are you going? What are you planning to do?"

But the train had come in. There was no time to answer.

CHAPTER SIX

A ROMAN SPRING

IN 1916 I was living in a small hotel in Rome near the Villa Borghese. Outwardly, the war had little effect on life in Rome. Only the bread was a little hard. War, which was devastating cities, leaving villages in flames, and fields gaping with shell holes, strewn with corpses, and barren of growing things, merely added decorative touches to Roman life and contributed to its picturesque qualities.

Handsome blue lights glowed on the streets at night, instead of the customary white. There were no planes in the dark blue sky studded with big stars. Automobiles had been requisitioned and in their place *vetturas*—big open carriages that seated six persons—had been substituted. They were drawn by a horse, usually either tired or lazy, with a sluggish driver perched under a big, multicolored umbrella. Everywhere, in the streets and gardens, at parties and at concerts, there were men in elaborate uniform, so many of them, so elegantly decked out, that it was difficult to remember that somewhere real war was being waged. These were more like the young men of musical comedy, gay, handsome, with gleaming white teeth.

Rome was at its loveliest under an incredibly blue sky pierced by the pines that grew about the historic villas. Roses and mimosa were in fragrant bloom.

My friends knew that I was at home to them every Wednesday, and one calm autumn day my small living room was crowded when the door was flung open and the Countess Maria Mazzoleni came in, accompanied by a man and woman whom

I did not know. Donna Maria was jokingly called "the keys to Rome" because all doors were open to her. She knew the royal family, the artists, the foreign ministers and, indeed, the whole foreign colony. She had been a great beauty, and now, though over fifty, she was still lovely, tall and slim, with cameo-perfect features, dressed always in black and white to emphasize her straight black hair and colorless skin. An unexpectedly tender and understanding smile transformed the rather severe face.

The man who accompanied her was tall and well built, with an intelligent face and a rather sophisticated smile. He looked for all the world like Maupassant's *Bel Ami*. That was the Baron de Jouvenel. Behind his broad shoulders a pair of gray-green eyes regarded me with frank curiosity, the eyes of his wife, the French novelist, Colette.

She was short and plump. Her face, broad at the forehead, tapered to a point at the chin. Her nose, too, was pointed, with sensitive nostrils that vibrated in response to everything she saw or heard so that it seemed sometimes as though she must hear with her nose.

Her face, framed in light brown hair, worn short long before it was the fashion to do so, was young. She was forty-four at that time, but only in rare moments when she was at rest and the corners of her mouth drooped, was it possible to guess her age.

With Colette's arrival, the room seemed charged with electricity; the atmosphere, which had been tranquil, became gay and vibrant. About her pranced a French bulldog, the bells on his collar keeping up a gay jangle, and Colette herself, before she had time to remove her coat, was moving swiftly around the room, looking at my sculptures that were set out on shelves and asking me a thousand questions.

And so the most remarkable woman of my acquaintance came into my life. For Colette is not merely a gifted woman who has written some brilliant books. She is an extraordinary woman.

She is a poet, perhaps the greatest poet of our time, though she has never written a poem.

A Russian writer whose name has slipped my mind began one of his books by saying: "I take a piece of life, poor and gray, and I make a wonderful story because I am a poet." I remember that whenever I think of Colette. For everything she touches glows with life.

She is a poet of every day, of simple life, of the things we are accustomed to think of as unpoetic. She can endow such commonplaces as food with glamorous qualities. In one of her articles she told of being invited to dinner in a French provincial town. When the meal was served, she tasted it and exclaimed: "It is wonderful! What is it?"

"It is beef, madame," replied her hostess.

"But tell me how it is done, what you have put in it?"

"Beef, madame."

"How did you flavor your marvelous gravy?"

"With beef, madame."

She ended her article by saying: "Incredible to eat beef that is made of beef—in our time when gold is made without gold, pearls without pearls, and Venus without flesh."

At once Colette began to take me in hand. She found me pale and recommended quantities of oranges. She thought my hair was badly arranged and decided to alter it. She declared that I did not have enough fresh air and that I must get out and breathe. She took charge of me with a capable firmness that left me breathless.

That winter I saw her nearly every day. She was as good as her word. Obediently I ate quantities of oranges; meekly I submitted to having my hair cut—she did it herself. My husband was annoyed because it made me look like a little girl, but Colette was delighted. And she took me out often to "make me breathe." She always came unannounced, her French bull, Gamelle, prancing behind her with a jingle of bells, and took me from my work by force.

Her reputation, because of her books, was highly sophisticated, but I found her to be simple and deeply healthy, as a countrywoman is healthy. A languorous young woman told us one day that every morning she lay for hours in a hot scented bath. Colette was not impressed. "I scrub for ten minutes in a cold bath with a hard brush," she retorted.

Our favorite excursion was to the mineral spring Acqua Acetosa, in the Campagna di Roma, which was said to have been Goethe's morning walk. We went in a rocking *vettura*, behind a horse that ambled slowly along. At the spring there was a small country hotel where we lunched out of doors. Here Colette told me about her childhood, about the old house in which she had lived, about her mother whom she later described so lovingly in *Sido*.

Colette's mother had spent her whole life in the country. Her wisdom came from the fields, from the garden, from the earth, a wisdom that she bequeathed to her daughter. When she was seventy-six, a year before her death, the Baron de Jouvenel wrote, asking her to come to them. It was impossible, she replied. Someone had given her a cactus that bloomed only once in four years. She was no longer young, and if she were to go away now she might never see the plant bloom.

Once, Colette told me, her mother was asked to give some roses for the funeral of a neighbor. As a rule she gave her flowers lavishly, but this time she refused.

"But why," demanded the surprised friend, "do you refuse when you have so many roses in your garden?"

"Why," retorted Colette's mother, "must they die because my neighbor does? No, I will not give them."

Yet she willingly put them into the hands of little children to destroy if they would.

During these long drives, Colette spoke with great tenderness of her father, Colonel Colette. Her given names were Sidonie Gabrielle but she had always been called Colette. The Colonel had lost his leg in the war of 1859. When the Emperor visited the hospital and came to his bed after the amputation, the severed leg lay wrapped in a towel beside him.

"How do you feel?" asked the Emperor.

"Mother and child doing well," replied the Colonel, cheerfully, indicating the leg.

"Do you want anything?"

"Crutches, Majesty, crutches!"

2

"When I was ten," Colette said, "my father wrote poetry and very solemn prose and read it aloud to me. I listened attentively and criticized severely. 'Too many adjectives,' I told him. My father was furious, but I insisted, 'Too many adjectives.' After his death we found hundreds of sheets of manuscript hidden among his things. All of them had been dedicated to his beloved Sido, but he never had shown them to her."

During one of these drives Colette turned and looked at me fixedly. "You ought to have a child, my dear," she said abruptly. "You need a son." Some years later in Paris, at a dinner given by the poet André Germain, Madame de Noailles asked me about my son. "He is marvelous," declared Colette. "He came out of my head."

Colette's husband had been sent to Rome on a diplomatic mission, and Colette was in great demand in Roman society. Her gift for telling stories made her the central figure wherever she went. The French Academy of Rome occupied the historical Villa Medici, and every Saturday afternoon the French colony, Roman aristocracy, and foreign artists gathered in the gardens where we lingered until the moon rose, talking about music, about art, about politics, and about war, which was an unreal shadow under that brilliant sky.

On Sundays we spent gay mornings at Campo de Fiori, an open-air market where you could buy everything from old furniture, jewels, books and music, to flowers and fruits. We bought food cooked out of doors and ate it from paper bags as we walked about.

All that winter I worked hard, doing portraits of Roman society women, artists, dancers, and some statues from my

imagination. One morning the editor of the *Giornale d'Italia* called to ask me to give an exhibition for a cause sponsored by his newspaper, the tubercular children of Italian soldiers. It was my first exhibition, and I was nervous and frightened. I worked all the night before, and early in the morning arranged my sculptures in a beautiful exhibition room of the Hotel Excelsior. That afternoon, in the concert hall of the same hotel, Colette lectured about my sculptures. She told about the people who had posed for me; described my, at that time, youthful figure, round childish face, and Russian accent. "Her accent," she said, "rolls refreshingly and agreeably to our ear, like water running over the pebbles of a brook."

The main feature of the exhibition was the portrait of the Queen of Naples. How strange, Colette said, that this queen had come back to Italy, which had been closed to her since the Garibaldi revolution over fifty years before! And she came at last in wax, a portrait-ghost, "a distinguished phantom of a woman who had been a queen, resting on her knees, draped in black velvet, her two hands of an elegant skeleton."

She said that she had asked me what my inspiration was and that I answered her, "Music, Colette." Madame Barjansky, she said, did psychological portraits.

Madame Barjansky, meanwhile, was sitting in the last row, trying to make herself invisible; her ears pounding, her heart throbbing. Her head ached, and she was a little seasick.

For I was expecting a child, who was born in December, the son Colette had invented.

That evening Colette left Rome, but the friendship that began then has lasted all our lives.

It was in Colette's company that I saw the breathless beauty of Roman gardens and villas, which I remember now, half wondering whether I dreamed their untroubled loveliness in that

troubled world. The Villa Sciarra, a palazzo of the Renaissance, was such a place. Through its huge gardens, with Renaissance statues, columns, roses, and camellias, stalked hundreds of white peacocks.

With Colette I visited the quiet gardens of the Roman Palatine, which the director, Giacomo Boni, had reconstructed from plans of ancient gardens. He had built a labyrinth, its walls made of pine trees, where I got lost and could not get out. Becoming more and more frightened, I called for help, and Boni, who was chatting with Colette at the entrance, shouted instructions that brought me back to them. When I got out, white and upset, Boni told us Eleonora Duse had once grown hysterical, trying to make her way out of this labyrinth.

Giacomo Boni was a Venetian, an expert in the art of ancient Greece and Rome. My husband and I had met him first when we were taken to him by the Countess Piccolomini, one of the most beautiful women in Rome, who died a few years later in the full flower of her youth and beauty. She asked my husband to bring his cello, and he surprised me by doing so, for like most musicians he disliked playing except in concerts.

That was a flawless setting for music because Boni had planted his wonderful gardens in such a manner as to achieve exquisite color combinations. Sometimes the garden was all yellow and gray, sometimes blue and fuchsia. And Boni lived in the midst of his peerless garden, his studio nearly bare except for an antique Victory, a beautiful figure, three-quarters life size. It lacked a head, but the movement of legs and arms and draperies was music as well as sculpture.

Not long before, Giacomo Boni had become paralyzed as a result of shock when a close friend was burned to death in an airplane crash, and he could move only with extreme difficulty. In the shadow of a beautiful antique marble, among the flowers and the ruins, my husband played for the crippled Boni, and played magnificently.

When he had finished Boni smiled radiantly. "I have every-

thing here," he said quietly. "The sunrise and the sunset, the moon and the flowers, and the ancient world. All that I lacked was music, and you have brought me that. I thank you."

We came back again and again to the Roman Palatine and to Giacomo Boni. Often he left us alone in the evenings to enjoy the ruins and the moonlight. For he went to bed early. He never missed the sunrise, which was an ever fresh delight to him. And when he talked to us of the ruins, they came alive for us under the light of his brilliant knowledge. They were complete once more; people of the past walked and moved in them. Today there is a single grave in the midst of the gardens, on which is inscribed, "Here lies Giacomo Boni."

4

We were living in a narrow house on the Piazza di Spagna when Olga Signorelli came to see us, bringing with her a little hunchbacked man. At first sight I thought, appalled, "How ugly he is!" Before he left I could see nothing but his beauty. For this was the great Italian poet, Giovanni Cena.

He was abnormally small. He had tuberculosis. He was pigeon-breasted as well as hunchbacked. But he had a child's heart and a mind as clear and sweet as a phrase of Mozart. He was goodness itself. Many Italians believe that it brings good luck to touch the lump of a hunchback. But Cena did not mind. His smile was singularly sweet when he said, "You see—I bring luck to everyone."

He brought more than luck, for his great love for humankind was not expressed in words alone. This poet was very practical in the expression of his love for the poor, for the unhappy, for the sick, for children.

The poor of Italy lived in utter degradation, under unbelievable conditions of filth. In the little villages many of them existed in huts without windows, barely nourished by the most primitive food, uneducated, and without any hope of future improvement. The contrast between life in the palaces of Rome

and life in the poverty-stricken villages was overwhelming. Cena knew both worlds. He himself came of peasant stock, from Calabria in the south of Italy. He set to work to improve the lot of his people.

At first there seemed to be little that a poor man—a poet and a dreamer, a sick man and a cripple—could do; but Cena had a gift for finding people who would help him in his work. There was a lonely and wealthy woman named Sophia Camarota, who dedicated her life to collaborating with Cena in the plan he worked out for the education of the peasants.

Through an arrangement with the Ministry of Culture, traveling schools were sent into the villages, to the farming country and the vineyards, wherever groups of people lived without any opportunity for education. And the people came to the trains where they were taught to read and write, and given a smattering of history, geography, and other necessary subjects.

Nor did Cena's efforts stop there. With him as the guiding spirit, funds were raised to establish colonies to which sick children could be sent to regain their health and acquire the rudiments of an education.

He came to us often. I think he loved us. I can see him now in that narrow house in Rome, sitting near the fireplace, talking about his work with all the ardent enthusiasm of the poet; for he was a great poet, and his work was inspired and beautiful. But his greatest poem was the man himself.

With his malformed and diseased body, Cena had always had a very precarious hold on life, and before long we heard that he was ill, that he had grippe, and then that he had died.

Never in my life have I seen so gay and cheerful a funeral. It was an unusual day for Rome, the sky gray and overcast. There was a huge throng of people present, but not the usual black-robed, subdued crowd of mourners. These were the people whom Cena had helped, peasants from Calabria, from the Campagna Romana, dressed in the bright colors of their native costumes. They had not come to grieve. They had come to greet their friend, to say, "Goodbye. We shall meet again."

A number of the leading writers, poets, painters, and sculptors made addresses and then departed. Only a few carriages accompanied the poet's body to the cemetery where his coffin was to be left until it could be taken to Calabria. For this was a third-class Italian funeral, without any pomp.

At that time I was expecting my child, and I was oversensitive. Like every young woman, I was secretly full of fears. As my husband and I followed Cena's body to the cemetery I had a vision which I still half believe to have been real.

Cena was walking beside our carriage, smiling his good smile. And he was talking, talking, filling me with courage and confidence in the future.

As we left the cemetery I turned to look back. In the door stood Cena, waving his big black hat and calling: "Be courageous, my dear. Be brave. Everything will be all right."

5

And everything was all right. But when the time approached for my child to be born there was no room for me in the private clinic where I had expected to go. Military needs had filled all the rooms, and there was no choice but a hospital where I was supposed to provide my own physician and midwife. It was, to put it mildly, ill equipped to handle maternity cases. In fact, I was the only such patient in the whole hospital.

One morning my husband came into my room with the vague abstracted look his eyes had when he was withdrawn entirely from reality.

"You know, my dear," he said abruptly, "I have decided to begin an entirely new life. I am going to start daily exercises. I think I will begin right now."

I looked up at him. "You had better begin," I managed to say, "by getting the doctor."

My husband took one terrified look at me and shot out of my room to a telephone. Our doctor, as it happened, was also the physician to the Queen of Italy. Alexandre, so excited he

was barely coherent, managed to reach the doctor by telephone.

"All right," the latter replied calmly, when he finally understood what was wrong. "I am ready. But you will have to come for me."

Alexandre rushed out of the hospital. There were no automobiles as all of them had been requisitioned because of the war. A horse and carriage stood at the door, but the horse refused to move in spite of all my husband's frenzied efforts. It was snowing for the first time in thirty years in Rome, and the horse was afraid to take a single step.

My husband, now rapidly losing his mind, raced back into the hospital, called the doctor again and reported that he could not come for him.

"My assistant is at a clinic not far from you," the doctor replied. "Go for him, and he will do what he can."

So Alexandre seized a hat and ran headlong for the clinic, hurled back the door, and rushed into the lobby where he shouted loudly for the assistant. Why he was not automatically locked up as mad, I have never understood, for in addition to his generally erratic behavior, his wild outcries, he was unshaven, his hair was long, and he wore perched on his head at a rakish angle the hat he had grasped in his haste, my midwife's hat, with a long velvet ribbon in it!

CHAPTER SEVEN

SCULPTURE AS OUTLINES

ART is not separate and distinct from daily living. It is the expression and illumination of daily living. Such expression is innate in all of us and yet, paradoxically enough, as man has become more civilized the tendency has grown to leave self-expression to the "artists," while the average man and woman go through life with a feeling of frustration, not realizing they are bereft of any way of expressing their thoughts and desires and the beauty that lies all about them.

The art of sculpture is man's most instinctive and natural form of expression. Long before men could read and write they were able to reproduce in plastic form not only the human beings and animals that they saw about them but their conception of their gods as well. Sculpture was probably prehistoric man's earliest method of making himself understood.

At no time does one feel the same authentic sense of creation as when one takes a piece of wet earth, of mud, of clay, and makes something.

Paul Gsell quotes Auguste Rodin as saying: "Art is contemplation. It is the pleasure of the mind which penetrates nature. . . . It is the joy of the intelligence which sees clear in the universe and re-creates it by illuminating this awareness. Art is the most sublime mission of man because it is the exercise of thought which tries to understand the world and to make it understood."

Among highly civilized people an understanding of and love for art have become associated too often with culture and too

rarely with instinctive self-expression. And yet children, if they are given an opportunity, often reveal unexpected talent for sculpture. My first sculpture was made at the age of six. My parents were giving a large dinner party at our home in Odena, and the two maids were busy setting the table and arranging the flowers. In Russia butter was served in big crystal balls set in silver containers, and a huge mound of butter, probably several pounds, was placed on the table. For a while I eyed that smooth mound in fascination; then I took some spoons, forks, and knives and modeled in the butter a flower such as exists only in the imagination. It was a little like an orchid though at that time I had never seen one. My first sculpture was a great success, for the guests admired it so highly that none of them would touch the butter.

That was in the vanished world of Czarist Russia, and for some years I was the only child in a very wealthy family. Because I was quick and volatile and imaginative, my bewildered parents sometimes regarded me with the same wonder as though a changeling had appeared in the bosom of the family. They accounted for my temperament, which was so unlike their own, by the fact that I had a wet nurse who, my father learned later, raided his cellar every night for a bottle of champagne. Perhaps, he told my mother, it was the champagne I had imbibed with my nurse's milk that made me so fiery and emotional.

My father was an inveterate art collector. Like most Russians he never did anything halfheartedly, and he collected everything he saw. Our rooms were big and high, the upper half of the walls covered with paintings, the lower part with miniatures, so closely placed that one could not determine the color of the wall.

It was rare for my father to return home without bringing a new acquisition, rare for a day to pass without large packing boxes arriving. The rooms were filled, the attic overflowed, and still my father collected, and my mother grumbled. There was a great collection of chessboards, oriental and Persian; his

wonderful oriental rugs, so many of them that each room was carpeted with rugs on top of rugs.

He also collected diamonds, but my mother, a very good-looking woman, took so little interest in jewels that she did not even care to wear them, and they appeared only when my father took them from the safe in his library and spread them out on a table to show his friends.

Later on, when my mother died in the early years of Bolshevism, this passion for collecting came to my father's assistance because, by selling his art treasures one at a time, he was able to buy food and the necessities of life.

In those days in Russia people did not have trained nurses or young women to look after children. Our nurses were old women, generally widows whose own families had grown up and married. They were peasants who could neither read nor write, but their wisdom was ancient, and their minds were peopled by the strange beings of Russian folklore.

My nurse had an endless supply of fairy tales and legends. One of them in particular I have never forgotten, the tale of Ilya Mourometz, Russia's legendary hero, who slept until he was thirty. Then one day he awoke, shook off his long lethargy, arose and began to walk, pulling up a huge tree which he used for a staff, and he set out to conquer the world. It is like that I think of Russia, the giant who for so many centuries had lain asleep and then rose and walked and conquered.

And as my nurse spun her stories I saw in my imagination everything she told me, for all my life things have come to me in images, in pictures. Later, when a German governess and a French teacher were provided for me, I learned more fairy tales, Andersen and Grimm especially, and still the stories came to me in the shape of pictures, so that my imagination was filled with visions.

After trying to express one of these pictures in sculpture in the butter at my mother's dinner party, I next tried color. One afternoon my mother came in, took from her fur coat a little

bunch of fresh violets she had bought on the street, and tossed it on the table. I hunted for some pencils, a blue one and a red, and drew the violets. The drawing was not good, but the violets had a quality of life until they were finally rubbed out from being carried in my father's pocket and brought out to be shown proudly to all his friends.

Next to the pictures that constantly formed in my mind and demanded some form of expression, the most important thing to me was beauty in the people around me. That was probably why, of all my family, I cared most for my father's stepmother. She was some thirty years younger than my grandfather and fantastically beautiful, with wonderful features, big blue eyes, and curly black hair. She was a Viennese, a stranger in Russia, who to the end of her life spoke Russian with a strong accent. After her husband's death she felt always a little alien and very lonely. I believe I was her only friend.

I understood her loneliness even then, because I too was lonely and alien. The other girls in school did not interest me, and I lived shut up in my imaginative world until the pictures in my mind clamored for expression, and I began to take drawing lessons in a private school. My teacher was a fat little man, who pompously called himself an artist-painter. He was a bad painter and he was not an artist at all. For two hours a day he let me draw Greek gods from plaster casts. I was alone in the class, and on the floor below someone played the piano, so from the very beginning music was a background for art. Those were happy hours, but sometimes the fat little man would bustle around and correct my drawings, with the result that they were no longer mine at all and certainly no closer to being Greek gods.

In spite of my inadequate instructor, I grew more and more interested in art, particularly when lessons began in perspective and in the drawing of round spheres so plastic they seemed to stand out from the paper. My parents tried in vain to make my interest in art less intense by diverting it to piano lessons, but when that failed they engaged one of the leading Russian painters

as an instructor. My mother drew the line at hiring professional models, so I painted the portraits of several of my friends. They were not always interesting material to paint, but the practice was good.

At that time Munich was a town of art, of youth, of creation, of wonderful theaters, and my heart was set on going there and concentrating on art. So alone I left Russia before the revolution. The country I left was a strange one, the giant was still sleeping. It was a land in which the rich could be happy, but where the lot of the poor was one of appalling want, ignorance, hopelessness. To be poor in Russia at that time was to know nothing, all one's life long, of joy or pleasure or leisure.

Munich, like all the places in which one lives in youth, seemed a glowing and joyous place. My first task was to find a good art school. The academy was for men only, and I had the same experience that confronts all young art students, that of trying to find a place where I could best learn to express the pictures that continued to take shape in my imagination. I went to an art shop where reproductions were sold and inquired about art schools. The proprietor gave me an impressive list, and I went from one to another. One of them pleased me more than the others, and I paid for six months' instruction and went for my first morning of sculpturing.

Thirty or thirty-five men and women of all ages were standing about the big room in the center of which stood a naked model, an ugly woman who had taken an ugly pose.

The supervisor showed me my stand and the clay. "Do this model," he said.

"How?" I asked blankly.

He shrugged his shoulders. "Like the rest of them," he said impatiently.

I looked to my right. The student there was working ineptly and haphazardly, and the results were terrible. I looked to my left. The sculpture there was just as bad. Feeling lost and uncertain, I set to work with no instruction, no directions, to model what I saw. After I had worked two weeks in this pointless

fashion, the teacher arrived and came to my stand. Without a word or a correction, he simply knocked down what I had done and made a new model. The result was a sculpture ably done, but it was not mine. I watched the teacher as he moved from stand to stand, making no suggestions, giving no explanations, simply destroying the work of the students and doing work of his own in its stead.

I looked again at the clay figure which the teacher had made on my stand. It was good, but it was so alien to my own conception, so unlike what I saw with my own eyes, that I had no idea how to continue. I felt desperate. Although six months of teaching had been paid for, I left the school and went in search of a new one. I must have tried six or seven, in each of which there were teachers who failed to teach, before I decided to leave Munich and went to Paris.

There I found much the same situation. True, the Parisian teacher was eloquent; he talked a great deal about himself and his own experiences. But he did not teach. Somewhere, it seemed to me, there must be a teacher who could help me. So I went back to Munich, this time making no attempt to enter an art school. I decided to get a private teacher, to find an artist who would let me work in his studio and give me the criticism and advice I needed as I went along.

I went from exhibition to exhibition until I found one which I liked immensely. I looked up the artist and asked him if he would let me work in his studio and give me some lessons.

He refused energetically. "What can a woman do?" he demanded.

"But why won't you let me try?" I insisted.

He thrust some clay into my hands. "Here," he said peremptorily, "make something."

I looked at him and then at the clay. It was so apparent that he expected me to fail that it was unendurable. Make something, I thought, and in half an hour I made a man throwing a stone with great effort. It was only a sketch, but it was alive, and the whole body was in movement. The artist looked at it and said:

"You are really gifted. I shall be very proud to teach you."

After that he allowed me to work in his studio every morning, providing my own model. From time to time he would interrupt his own work and come to my stand to give me some criticism or make suggestions. But he never touched my sculpture; I felt that it was really mine. And I was happy.

Then one day there was a knock at the door. A stout old man with a big beard came into the studio. My teacher, in a great flutter, began to display his sculptures one after another, and the unexpected guest looked at them and said, "H'm!"

I told my model to rest and sat back in a corner. I was very young and looked like a little girl, so after a glance the old man paid no further attention to me.

When he came at length to my stand he turned to my teacher. "This," he said, "I like. It is your best sculpture." My model, who had recognized the visitor, smothered a laugh, and my teacher looked green. The old man, it appeared, was the celebrated sculptor, Hildebrand, whose name in Munich carried as much weight as that of Rodin in Paris.

After Hildebrand's visit, my teacher became uncomfortable in my presence. He no longer criticized or helped me with my work. He talked less and less. Then one morning he said abruptly: "I prefer to work at home. You may continue to work in the studio if you are willing to pay the rent." So I had a studio of my own, and once again worked alone and without help.

It was during those months of constant striving that I discovered my own system of sculpture. I discovered the beauty and value of pure line and began to consider every form not in the round but as a series of lines. I learned to work entirely by outlines, constantly turning the model and the clay figure, doing the basic outlines and filling in, so that my sculpture was a series of drawings, drawings, drawings in clay.

I found an apartment near the studio and began to work from early morning until night. My need for color was never satisfied entirely by sculpture, and so I did a number of paintings as well

as modeling, and drew nude models in the art schools. Wherever I went I carried a notebook and pencil and made outlines and yet more outlines.

Munich was an enchanting place for a young artist, filled with writers, painters, theatrical people, and youth, and I went to a number of fancy-dress balls. As I was very shy, I felt comfortable only when I was another personality, and in a Velásquez dress, hired from a museum, I even acquired a kind of courage and a sense of release. The leaders in the art movement there were a group of Russians who called themselves the Blue Cavaliers. Two of them, Kadinsky and Javlensky, were men of great reputation.

From time to time I went to Paris or to Italy, and so it was that Alexandre Barjansky, whom I was to marry, introduced me to d'Annunzio in Paris, who led me to my method of working in wax.

2

The idea of teaching sculpture never occurred to me until those war years in Rome. A few weeks after my son was born, early in the year 1918, my money abruptly stopped coming from Russia. The fact that the Russians had made a separate peace with Germany had aroused a bitter dislike toward them among the Allies, and my husband and I, as Russian citizens, found ourselves in an awkward and difficult situation in Italy. Alexandre was no longer able to give concerts, and we were in an extremely precarious position.

Because of the exhibition at which Colette had lectured about my wax sculptures, I was already known in Roman society, and one night at a dinner party I met a charming woman, one of those energetic persons who are always ready and willing to do things. She remarked that as a Russian I must be finding myself in material difficulties.

"Yes," I said, "it is very difficult, so difficult, indeed, that I may open a school of sculpture." As a matter of fact, the idea

had never occurred to me, and I might just as idly have said, "I believe I will jump out of the window."

But my energetic friend leaped at the idea. "What!" she exclaimed. "You will really teach your wonderful art?"

Early the following morning she telephoned. "When are you going to open your school?" she demanded. "I have nine pupils for you."

So I set out through the streets looking for a studio in which my classes could be held. There were few studios in Rome at that time, but on the Via Po there was an old garage, covered with yellow and white wild roses, set in a little garden with one fig tree. It appealed to me, and I went to see the owner who willingly allowed me to use the garage. Some modeling stands, tables, and armchairs bought in an antique shop, and big vases filled with flowers and decorative leaves—and my school was ready.

I telephoned to my energetic friend and said: "I am ready to open my school. Who are my pupils?" As she told me the names I listened in growing astonishment, for every one of them had a title and a historical background.

A little peasant girl was hired as my model, and the first lesson was given, using the system I had developed myself. It was an easy system to teach as it is an easy system to use; the only difficulty had been in discovering it. I taught my young pupils to consider every plastic form—man's head, or body, or animal—as nothing but a multitude of outlines. Having begun with a profile, as thin, as sharp as a Hindu shadow, I turned to the full face and did another outline, and through such constant turning, constant building of new outlines the sculpture took shape.

My school of sculpture was a success. By the end of a month I had twenty pupils. When they took home the first heads they had modeled their families refused to believe that they had done the work themselves, they were sure I had modeled for them, though I never touch the work of a pupil. So the parents were invited to come and watch the lessons and see for

themselves. Around the walls of the little garage stood duchesses, princesses, countesses, marquises, watching their young geniuses at work.

From the very beginning teaching was an exhilarating experience. It is a kind of excavation into the hidden potentialities of a person. It is a constant surprise to me to discover how much hidden and unsuspected ability there is. It is exciting to watch its discovery and its unfolding, and to see the change and flowering of a personality that has discovered its own true bent. Having had this experience many times I cannot help but feel convinced that one of the most tragic wastes in modern life is the waste of artistic talent and expression, lying dormant, undeveloped in a host of people.

Rodin once remarked to Paul Gsell: "Have you ever thought that in modern society artists, I mean real artists, are almost the only men who do their work with pleasure? . . . What our contemporaries lack the most, it seems to me, is a love for their profession. Almost all the men of today seem to look upon work as a frightful necessity, a damned drudgery, while it ought to be regarded as our reason for being and our happiness. The world will not be happy until all men have the souls of artists, that is, until all will take pleasure in their task."

CHAPTER EIGHT

CHIAROSCURO

THERE is a picture in my mind—a green lawn lighted by the rays of the setting sun, purple and white lilacs in bloom, and a slender girl of fourteen lying on the lawn engrossed in a book in a blue binding.

That was in Russia in a small southern town by the sea. The book was d'Annunzio's *La Gioconda*, dedicated to the beautiful hands of Eleonora Duse.

Beautiful hands. The little girl closed the book, looked into space, and imagined pale, tender, transparent hands with long nervous fingers. If she could only see those magic hands! But she was only fourteen, and Italy was far away. Many years must pass before she could travel, learn Italian, go to the far places where Eleonora Duse and her beautiful hands were to be found.

Some ten years later in Rome I saw the hands of Eleonora Duse, and as I held them in my own I remembered the green lawn, the setting sun, the lilacs, d'Annunzio's book, and the wistful little girl.

From the time when I first went to Italy, I studied Italian so that I could speak it fluently, always with the thought, "Now I shall be able to talk to Eleonora Duse."

But first I had to find her. She was not on the stage, and no one knew where she was. It was a musician friend of my husband's to whom I spoke of my ardent wish to meet the great actress.

"But that is easy to arrange," he said promptly. "There is

a Russian lady here who is a great friend of hers. Whether Duse is now in Rome I do not know, but she always comes to see her friend when she is here. I will take you to meet Olga Signorelli tomorrow, and I am sure she will be delighted to present you to Duse."

So the next afternoon the musician took me to Madame Olga Signorelli. Both the Signorellis were physicians. They were extremely different in type. He was short, broad, cheerful, a South Italian Calabrian. She was very tall, a pale blonde, Mongolian, charmingly ugly, highly intelligent: a woman who was able to live within her own closed life and attract to her an invigorating group of writers and artists.

The Signorellis were the happiest couple I have ever known, perhaps because they followed the same profession and had a tremendous number of interests in common. Theirs was the most closely knit "marriage," and yet they never married. They had met as young medical students in Rome and were at once strongly attracted to each other.

One day they sent a notice to their friends: "Dr. Signorelli and Dr. Risnevitsh have decided to live in free union." Everyone accepted their unconventional situation, and not only their old friends but new ones, Roman society, artists, ambassadors, were delighted to know them. They had three daughters, whom Dr. Signorelli legally adopted. Their house was always a cheerful one and people loved to go there. The walls were lined with glass shelves on which stood a splendid collection of Etruscan vases that they had gathered over the years.

My husband and I spent many unforgettable evenings in the small garden that enclosed the house of the Signorellis. Under an old fig tree was set a long table on which stood big Calabrian dishes of colorful designs filled with all sorts of fruit, and big pitchers of fragrant wine from Olévano Romano. We would sit in the garden until late at night discussing art. Under a dark sky filled with myriads of sparkling stars the artists talked, telling stories from their own lives, describing their adventures and experiences, arguing about problems of art. In those days one

could breathe freely in Italy, and speak and listen as one wished.

My musician friend had been right. Olga Signorelli was a very close friend of Duse's. Later, indeed, she wrote a splendid book about her. But I was never to meet Duse in the Signorelli home. I don't know why; whether it was because Duse did not like to encounter strangers, or whether her friends, jealously cherishing her rare friendship, were unwilling to share it with others.

My dream of doing Duse's portrait in wax dissolved. I began to realize that it would never be possible. For Duse was no longer young; she hated her aging appearance; she feared age, and she no longer wanted anyone to see her face. Indeed, she shrank from being with people who were not known to her.

Once I said wistfully to Olga, "I would like to come invisibly to Duse, sit somewhere in a corner, not even speak to her, just listen, and see her." But because of her morbid horror of her own aging body, it was not easy for anyone to meet Duse. I understood this more clearly when I saw the only film she had ever made, from the book *Cenere* (Ashes) by Grazia Deledda. Although Duse played the leading part, the audience did not once see her face. Sometimes she revealed her profile, but during almost the whole picture one saw only her back—and her expressive hands.

During the winter of 1919 we were living in a small apartment in the Piazza di Spagna, in an old house such as you might find in an etching by Piranesi. We had no doorbell because ringing annoyed my husband. Our friends knew that the door was never closed, and they simply walked in. Only strangers knocked.

One morning I heard a knock and called, "*Avanti*." Into our apartment and into our lives walked Signorina Le Mere. She stood for a moment in the doorway, looking at me, at my husband, and at our two-year-old son, who was playing with a long train on the floor. She smiled. "You do not know me. I am Signorina Le Mere. I have been sent to you by Eleonora Duse, who would like so much to know you. May she come tomorrow?"

We were astonished and speechless.

Signorina Le Mere went on: "She has heard so much about Mr. Barjansky's wonderful playing and about your sculpture. She is eager to come. If you permit, she will be here tomorrow at three, and she would be greatly pleased if you were to receive her alone."

It was a gray December day, and early in the morning I went to the celebrated staircase of the Piazza di Spagna, where I bought an armload of flowers. All morning I arranged them in vases. My little boy, who had golden curls and dark dreaming eyes, helped me, handing me each flower with great care. He never destroyed flowers as other little children do, and often in the garden I had seen him touching them lightly, one by one, crying, "*Fióri—tanto belli!*"

The flowers made our living room festive, and we were waiting eagerly when, precisely at three o'clock, I heard slow footsteps on the stairs. I flung open the door to a slim, slightly bent woman who wore a black coat that completely concealed her figure. A black veil fell from her small dark hat, hiding her face. Her whole appearance was extremely modest, the only luxury being her long white gloves.

My husband bent over her hand and removed her coat. Her dress, too, was black, almost monastic in its severe lines. She came into the living room and sat in an easy-chair near the mantelpiece, removing her white gloves and her hat with quick, simple movements.

My little boy came in; Duse beckoned to him, and he went to her with spontaneous confidence. The divine hands of Eleonora Duse rested lightly on his head, and she blessed him.

Her hands were beautiful because of their expression, but they were not pretty hands. Many film actresses and society women have prettier hands, longer fingers, finer and whiter skin, better shaped nails. Duse's hands were very thin, and the veins were visible under transparent flesh. They were not young hands. I think they had never been young. They led their own secret

life, thinking and suffering. I have never seen such hands in a woman, though occasionally I have found them in a creative man or in some saint in an early Renaissance picture.

It was very quiet in our little living room. My boy went away. My husband was silent. Duse glanced about her, saw my wax sculptures, and went to examine them, meditating for some time before the portrait of the Queen of Naples.

"*Bello, molto bello*," she said quietly. "Tell me about the Queen of Naples. I, too, met her."

So I told her of my meeting with the queen, and she listened intently without interruption. Then she looked toward the piano, and the cello standing in its case beside it.

"Please play for me," she said to my husband. "I know you are both great artists. I have seen your wife's sculptures, and now I would like to hear you."

"If I had known," my husband began in embarrassment, "that you wanted me to play for you, madame, I would have asked my accompanist to come."

"But you can play Bach unaccompanied," she insisted.

How strange she was! A woman who seemed to be utterly soft and modest, yet at the same time betrayed an enormous will and passionate desire. That desire had brought her, the unreachable and unapproachable, to our little apartment on the Piazza di Spagna.

My husband, much as he disliked playing outside of his concerts, obeyed Duse's strong will and played for her. He played for a long, long time. He must have done all the Bach suites for cello alone. And Duse listened, absorbed in the music. Whenever he stopped, she said in her low voice, "*Ancora*." And he played on.

The wonderful tone of his cello, so like the human voice, sang for her whom he admired more than any living artist, and she inspired him. She sat leaning forward, her chin resting on her fragile hand, her worn face carrying in it all the suffering of the earth, a face that did not know joy, a face that

suffered even in its rare moments of happiness. Her big dark eyes were burning. She was there, but she was elsewhere.

All of that pain is expressed in the cry of despair she uttered in one of her letters: "*Que ma vie est lourde à traîner!*"

At last my husband stopped playing. The room was dim with twilight, and silence hung over us. Neither my husband nor I moved for fear we would interrupt Duse's meditation. In some way it has always seemed to me that twilight unites people, embracing them, catching them up together in its veil. These minutes drew us nearer to one another than any words could have done.

At length Duse sighed and rose slowly to her feet. She did not say anything to my husband about his playing, but when he wanted to help with her coat she protested energetically: "No! No! Not with those hands!" She herself put the coat on quickly, and when she kissed me goodbye I saw that her eyes were wet with tears.

"*Che máni,*" she said, "*che máni! Ma egli è un genio, e non deve essere facile vivere con lui, piccina.*"

Duse, who had given the great love of her life to Gabriele d'Annunzio, knew the ways of geniuses. Olga Signorelli, in her book on Duse, related the story of that famous love affair, which brought such tragedy to the actress. When d'Annunzio had written his novel, *Il Fuoco*, his own account of the great romance, he took the script to Schurmann, the impresario, who rushed to Duse and suggested that she stop publication. Duse refused. Her own pain did not matter, she said, when d'Annunzio was making such a contribution to Italian literature. And she added the bitter cry of the aging woman, "Anyhow, I am forty years old—and I am in love."

On that gray December afternoon, my husband and I accompanied Duse downstairs and helped her into the little one-horse carriage that was awaiting her. She was driven away by her elderly coachman, and a moment later it seemed to us only a dream that Eleonora Duse had spent the afternoon with us.

A few days later, early in the morning, she came to us again, for this was New Year's Day, 1920. We heard some one climbing the stairs, breathing heavily. To my joy and amazement I saw Duse, carrying a great bunch of violets.

"For you both for the New Year," she said, thrusting the violets into my hands, struggling with asthma. There was no elevator in our old-fashioned house, so I helped her climb the stairs, and my husband settled her in an easy-chair while I filled a big crystal bowl with the fragrant violets.

"They are my favorite flowers," she said, still breathing with difficulty, "and you must always love them."

That morning our living room was flooded with sunlight, and the windows and doors to the balcony stood open.

"How wonderful to be here with you," she said quietly, and then she went away.

2

A year later, in Florence, I saw Eleonora Duse again. She was on the stage once more. This was no longer the modest, thin, aging woman. This was Duse, the artist, in the full power of her wonderful talent.

The play was a poor one, *La Porta Chiusa*, by the Italian playwright Bracco. The scene was a smart house in which Duse was the hostess, beautifully dressed, animated, but disturbed because her only son had decided to leave on a long journey. Neither she nor her husband nor a friend who lived with them knew the reason for the son's decision.

On the stage Duse appeared to be a very tall woman. There was no trace of the bent posture we had noticed when she came to us. She was young and as erect as a pillar. She played, wearing her own white hair, without a wig, without make-up. She did not attempt to hide her age. She threw it and her wrinkles and her white hair like a defiance to the world. She was once more in full possession of her divine gift.

The second scene took place in the friend's bedroom. The son came to tell the friend that he was leaving the house forever because he knew the older man was his father.

Then from far away came Duse's voice, calling as she looked for her son. The voice came nearer, and then she appeared in the doorway, wearing a white dressing gown, a candle in her hand. She looked at them both and knew that her son had learned the secret that she had concealed for a lifetime. And she screamed. She screamed like a wounded animal.

It is impossible to describe the drama of that scene. Those who have seen Duse and heard that scream of despair will never forget it. It rings in my ears today. No one else could have played the scene. In anyone else the scream would have been false, melodramatic. Only Duse could make you feel the despair of the mother before whom a chasm has opened into which has fallen the whole complicated structure of a life based on a lie. It was such a scream as Anna Karenina might have uttered as the train rushed toward her.

The name of Sarah Bernhardt is always linked with that of Duse, and yet the two actresses were utterly unlike. Bernhardt, too, I saw play in old age, doing *La Dame aux Camélias* in Paris after her leg had become too stiff to move. Not for Bernhardt the white hair, the wrinkles, the flaunting of the marks of time. She did not seem to be young and gay. She *was* young and gay. Her make-up was brilliant, her voice and laughter sounded fresh, full of the joy of life, triumphantly in love. The audience was not conscious of the real Bernhardt, old, sick, and suffering; only of the young and vibrant creature whom she had created. At that time, as she could not move, she died standing in Armand's arms, motionless. Her only gesture was the flutter of a little white handkerchief that dropped from her lifeless hand.

When I came out of the theater it was with the impression of having been present at a miracle, a victory over age and time, life and death.

Sarah Bernhardt played others. Duse always played herself. I remember the thin, incomparably expressive hands, with their

sorrow and their courage. And I think of a phrase she wrote once to a friend:

La mia anima ha più speranza che la mia sorte!
Dunque, avanti!

3

It was in Rome that I met once more the Marquise Casati. One afternoon I was invited to her beautiful home in the Via Piemonte. It was late in the afternoon, with a young moon rising, the quarter-hour that is so miraculously beautiful in Rome.

To enter the house one had to cross a big garden, with golden deer near the entrance. There were roses, roses, and a mimosa tree in full bloom.

As usual the Marquise Casati had created an unusual setting for herself. The door was opened by a tall dark butler in full uniform. Behind him a small, blond page, who looked like a miniature cupid, took my coat. The contrast was deliberate and designed to be amusing.

In the hallway there stood on a high pedestal a life-size Egyptian statue of a woman. The Marquise had told me about this statue on our first meeting in Paris. She had bought it because, on taking all its measurements, she had found they were exactly the same as her own.

In another big room there were enormous chairs, upholstered in pale blue brocade, with gold and silver cushions; wonderful fabrics; dark-shaded lamps; and flowers everywhere. In the center of the room, in a gold cage, was an enormous monkey, leaping and screaming. It smelled very bad.

Beyond there was a small library, without windows, the walls entirely filled with books in gold bindings. And in the center of the room, absolutely motionless, sat the Marquise Casati, dressed as usual in a fantastic manner. On this occasion she wore a tight black velvet bodice, extremely décolleté, and a long pleated skirt of black and white wool—with a train.

Her carrot-colored hair hung in long curls. The enormous

agate-black eyes seemed to be eating her thin face. Again she was a vision, a mad vision, surrounded as usual by her black and white borzois, and a host of charming and utterly useless ornaments.

4

There is an old palazzo in Rome I remember vividly, a Renaissance palace near the Vatican, in which there lived three brothers, sons of a Roman prince. One of them was a composer, a tall man with black eyes and white hair and extremely handsome. The second was both a diplomat and a sculptor, with dark blue eyes and black hair, an unusually aristocratic looking man, such as we imagine the *grand seigneur* of the Renaissance to have been. The third . . . ?

From the first moment the palace was an enchantment. We entered an inner court, built like cloisters, in the center of which was a wonderful old fountain, with green grass and palms growing between the flagstones. In one corner of the court there was a tiny elevator that took us to the floor where Prince Gelasio Caetani awaited us for luncheon.

We were taken from one immense room to another until we reached the two brothers. My husband was soon deep in conversation with the composer, while I talked with the brother who after a lifetime in the diplomatic service, having once served as Italian ambassador in Washington, had begun in his fifties to model in clay.

"I have put all my thoughts and all my maturity into my sculptures," he told me. And he displayed them, for the most part portraits of the Roman society beauties. Like himself they were in extremely good taste and beautiful in line, and he brought them out with a certain shyness.

After we had finished luncheon, the sculptor asked me, "Will you pay a visit to my dear brother Michelangelo?"

I looked at him in surprise. "Yes, of course," I said.

He led me to the elevator, and we went to another floor and once more crossed one enormous room after another.

And then I saw the head. The dead man with the living head. He was not sitting. He was not lying. He was suspended.

This was the third brother. He hung from the ceiling in a kind of hammock. He was suffering from tuberculosis of the bones, and his body was like a skeleton, but a skeleton with twisted limbs. He could not move. He could not even drink a glass of water. But his body was not so dead that it could not suffer, and he was filled with pain. Terrible pain.

I approached him slowly, wondering what on earth I could say to this man who hung between the floor and the ceiling, his body motionless, useless, dead except for its pain. Then I looked at him more closely. He had a beautiful head, and his eyes when I met them were black, and so full of life and joy and enjoyment that for a moment I could not breathe.

His brother spoke to him with great tenderness and devotion. "This is Madame Barjansky," he said. "I have told you about her. If you ask her, I am sure she will bring some of her wax sculptures to show you. My little one, you have never seen such sculptures, full of incredible life and beauty."

And the head with the living eyes replied, and my astonishment grew, for he had a staggering fund of knowledge and he talked to me at length and with wide knowledge of wax sculpture.

"But how do you know these things?" I asked. "There are so few people who are interested in this ancient and forgotten art."

"I read a lot," he answered. "That is my invention."

His eyes looked toward the ceiling, for that was the only position in which he could be comfortable. Affixed above his head was a mirror of which he was very proud, because he had worked out the idea himself. A book was hung over him, not touching him. He could not move, he could not turn the pages, but he could read in the mirror over his head. His body had

been so suspended that it would rest in the air and no part except the back of his head and the middle of his spine and a point under his knees needed to suffer from touching anything.

We talked on and on. At first his lot had seemed too tragic to be bearable, but he was living and enjoying life, the most complete victory I have ever seen of the mind over the body. That picture remains in my mind—the old palace of the three Roman princes, the huge rooms with their beautiful works of art, their brocades, and their columns, and in the center a head with burning eyes and a living will.

5

And in Rome there was music. My husband knew the whole Roman musical world: Respighi, Malipiero, and Ildebrando Pizzetti, whom d'Annunzio called Ildebrando da Parma. And there was also Renata Borgatti, a girl pianist, daughter of a famous Italian Wagnerian tenor. She played magnificently and Barjansky gave many concerts with her. She was beautiful and known in Paris as the young Abbé Liszt.

One afternoon she took us to see some friends of hers who lived, she said, near St. Peter's. She told us nothing else about them, except that she had a surprise for us. We walked along a squalid street, with laundry hanging on the balconies, filthy small children playing and screaming in the middle of the thoroughfare. It was an old house, shabby and gray, into which Renata took us, and we began to climb a broken-down staircase. On the top floor we stopped for breath while Renata rang the bell. She laughed. "I told you this would be a surprise."

The door was opened by a gardener, and we stepped not into a small and dirty apartment, as we had expected from our surroundings, but out onto the side of a hill and into a beautiful garden. The surprise was overwhelming. This was the Pope's observatory, surrounded by gardens and built in terraces. The observatory was built on top of a hill that sloped down to the top floor of the squalid building we had entered.

In the center of the gardens was a charming white house. As we walked through the gardens, we met a naked cherub strolling through the flowers, and later a man in bathing trunks, a strong man with blue eyes. He was a Czech painter and the owner of the little white house. He greeted us heartily and he was followed by a blond Swedish nurse carrying a little baby and last of all—wearing a kind of nightgown, though it was midafternoon—by the mistress of the house, a huge Swedish woman with golden hair, a reddish face, and big blue eyes.

The Brazdas were one of the most cordial families I have ever met. There above the dismal, poverty-stricken street in Rome we walked through cool and fragrant gardens, entered a Swedish house where we were served a Czech supper.

There are people who generate a kind of gaiety about them and the Brazdas were like that. As the evening passed, more and more people climbed the broken stairs to the white house in the gardens, all kinds of people, among them members of high Roman society and a group of Czechs who at that time were banding together against Germany to form the new Czechoslovakia.

Mrs. Brazda was extremely musical and gathered many musicians about her, and that night they all took turns in playing, while Mr. Brazda sang Czech folk songs. We grew gayer and gayer, and at length Mr. Brazda dashed out among us, wearing a wild wig. He was extravagantly painted, and he had donned an oriental shawl and Mrs. Brazda's lace panties. He distributed kitchen utensils to his guests with which we formed an impromptu orchestra, and we made strange and raucous music while he danced.

There was a moon over the garden when we left and thousands of fireflies that seemed like twinkling jewels against the dark breast of the hill.

CHAPTER NINE

DREAMERS AND CREATORS

IN time we left Rome and went to Florence, where we stopped in Fiesole. It was the first time my son had traveled. Michael was beautiful, with pale gold curls and dark eyes, and he seemed at home in the gardens of Florence.

He was not a child who asked. He explained. One day when my husband was walking with him in the garden, Michael asked, "What is nothing?" And before Alexandre could reply, the boy said, "I know. It is when you come into a room that is dark."

"What," he asked, "is God, and what is infinity?" And he forestalled my nonplused husband. "I know. It has no beginning and no end. It is like a ball. Then why do they make pictures of God as a man with a long beard? They should just make a ball or a big balloon."

Florence always makes me think of the music of Mozart, so clear, so simple, so full of golden light. The museums were filled with wonderful pictures, all flooded with light. Botticelli, everywhere Botticelli, and Leonardo da Vinci, and Fra Angelico. Unlike Rome, which has so many styles, ancient and baroque and Renaissance and modern, Florence seems to have been conceived as a whole and built by one man.

Everywhere, in streets and houses and museums and churches, there were madonnas. They were smiling and beautiful and innocent, and they looked like Venuses. And the Venuses, which were also to be found everywhere, had the innocent beauty of madonnas.

Over the river Arno were bridges and at that time the cele-

brated Ponte Vecchio, a market place filled with antiques and jewelry, still stood as it had stood for hundreds of years. In this town the sky is incredibly blue. If an angel with golden wings were to come down from that heavenly sky no one would be astonished, for angels and madonnas and Venuses are the real inhabitants of Florence.

There was peace in the evenings on the hill of Fiesole. At sunset we went strolling, admiring the lovely panorama of Florence stretched out at the foot of the hill. We walked there often with our friend, the Franciscan monk, Padre Caramelli, who was young and extremely beautiful, a Florentine from a canvas by Botticelli. He was tall and pale and dressed in brown Franciscan robes with sandals on his bare feet. In his company we were more deeply aware of the peace of Florence, for he himself was peace, and he imparted something of his own sweet goodness to those who were with him.

And there again we met Ildebrando Pizzetti, with whom we spent delightful days. I remember him particularly for a cello sonata that he was writing at that time to express sorrow for the death of his wife Maria. She was buried in the cemetery of Fiesole, which he could see from the windows of his villa. As he composed, he brought the music to my husband, a few pages at a time, and Alexandre played it for him as he had done for Ernest Bloch while the latter composed his rhapsody. All through the first movement of Pizzetti's sonata you seemed to hear a voice calling, "Maria! Maria!"

Years later my husband played the sonata in a concert in Frankfort-on-the-Main, putting into it all his admiration and devotion for the beautiful work. After the concert some critics asked him about Pizzetti and the sonata.

"This man," my husband replied promptly, "is metaphysically monogamous. He grieved for his wife. He will grieve all his life, and it is the intensity of his sorrow that rings in his music."

He broke off in some indignation when he observed that a friend of his was almost crying from laughter.

"What is the matter with you?" he demanded.

The friend pulled from his pocket a letter that he had received from me a short time before. In the letter I told him that Pizzetti had just married a young girl named Riri with whom he was very happy. "But don't tell my husband," I added, "until after the concert. It will affect his playing."

And I was right. For my husband never played the sonata again. He could not.

2

In Florence there lived another friend of ours, the pianist Luigino Franchetti. He was a musician of rare quality, with a deep understanding of music. He owned a beautiful palazzo, Torre di Bello Sguardo, where he lived with his mother who was accomplishing marvels in restoring the building to its original style. It was an immense building with a room on the main floor large enough to serve as a concert hall.

The rooms were pure gems, and filled with wonderful works of art. There were pianos everywhere, but Luigino, always eccentric, played only a battered old upright that had belonged to his father who was a fine amateur pianist. In some way, his loyalty to the ill tuned old upright symbolized for him his loyalty to his father. His parents had long been separated, and Luigino's sensitive heart was torn between his devotion for his mother and his admiration for his father. While Luigino lived in the magnificent Torre di Bello Sguardo in Florence, his father owned the famous Ca' d'Oro, the Golden House, in Venice, where he lived like a recluse, dividing his time between restoring the mosaics of his palace and playing the piano.

Like his son, the Baron Franchetti was an eccentric. One night he was in terrible pain and sent for a doctor, demanding morphine. The doctor refused to give it, Franchetti drove the doctor away with furious imprecations, pulled out a revolver and shot himself. Then it was discovered that he was dying of cancer of the stomach which had caused his horrible suffering.

Poor Luigino! It was one thing for his friends to accept

casually his eccentricities, his absent-mindedness, his astonishing way of dressing. But when he served in the Italian army during the First World War, his superior officers found his rugged individualism harder to take. One of these officers, disgusted with Luigino's artistic and nonchalant manner, ordered him to devote his energies in the future to currying his horse.

For a while the pianist was utterly dejected. Then it occurred to him that it might not be so bad, after all. It would at least provide exercise for his arms and help him to build his muscles for his piano playing, so he set to work currying the horse with a will, one hundred strokes on this side, one hundred on the other, taking good care to exercise both his arms equally.

When he told me this story I asked, "But what happened to the horse?"

Luigino laughed. "Oh, before I got done, the poor thing was completely bare."

Because he was a man of many languages, Luigino's superior officers decided to use him as an interpreter and once again they miscalculated his temperament. Luigino was ordered to question a prisoner who had just been captured.

"Where do you come from?" Luigino demanded.

"From Bavaria," replied the prisoner.

"Indeed! What part?"

The prisoner gave the name of the town.

"What!" exclaimed Luigino in excitement. "My aunt lives there. Do you know her?"

A moment later the officers were shocked, on entering the room to find Luigino enthusiastically embracing a rather dazed-looking prisoner.

I remember a week end that we spent at the Franchetti palace in Florence. The building was surrounded by a divine garden, with huge cypresses standing like sentinels, and great masses of flowers. In my room I found a bouquet of all sorts of orchids from their orchid greenhouse.

At luncheon we met some French writers. The meal had been planned with great formality and was served in a room with

walls of pale gray carved wood. During a lull in the conversation, Luigino's wandering attention was caught by a huge bowl of whipped cream that had been placed on a sideboard to eat with strawberries. Keeping his eyes fixed on the bowl, he got up from the table, entirely oblivious of his guests, and to the despair of his mother, set to work eating the whole bowl of whipped cream.

He was the most completely natural person I have ever known. Perhaps, after all, the people we call eccentrics are the only natural ones. The rest of us let our whole pattern of behavior become so modified by convention, so restrained in its expression, that the natural man and woman is completely submerged. Whether this is good or bad I do not know. Probably the world could not function if we were all to reveal our natural selves. But Luigino never bothered about appearances or restraint. He was never shackled in his impulses by convention.

Once he came to see us in Vienna. By some miracle he had remembered the street on which we lived, but naturally he had forgotten the number. A minor inconvenience of this kind did not hamper Luigino at all. He simply strolled down the street from one end to the other, shouting our names at the top of his voice, until we heard him and answered. But why all the fuss, he wondered. It was so simple that way! And he had found us, hadn't he?

3

In Florence we met that extraordinary man—extraordinary both in mind and appearance—the son of Ellen Terry and father of one of Isadora Duncan's children—Gordon Craig.

Isadora Duncan described him as looking like a Greek god but when I knew him his hair was silver-gray. His face was handsome and noble, his shoulders very broad. He dressed nearly always in silver-gray suits that matched his hair. He never wore a necktie and the open throat of his white shirt was becoming, as he was probably aware.

He too was an eccentric, but not unselfconsciously so like Luigino Franchetti. He was an exciting person to talk with, one of the greatest revolutionaries in theatrical design. There was only one other man at the time of the same stature, Adolphe Appia of Switzerland.

Gordon Craig had daring and original theories about the theater and longed to design stage sets by means of shadows and light and screens. But his ideas required great sums of money and as he could never get hold of the millions he needed, he was never in his lifetime able to turn his theories into tangible results. As a consequence, he was surpassed by others, and his ideas were, little by little, adopted and used by other people who had far less originality and creative ability. They did, however, have the quality he lacked, a willingness to compromise between their dreams and popular methods. But Gordon Craig would not compromise. He would not be satisfied with half measures. He did not want to cater to the theater. He wanted to re-create it. So he went on dreaming his grandiose dreams and conceiving new types of staging that might in time have reshaped the theater.

He went to Russia where he worked and originated a new school in theatrical design, for his ideas were taken up by the state, and he found there the backing he needed to carry them out.

He wanted to design the stage sets for Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* when Eleonora Duse appeared in it, and Isadora Duncan accompanied him when he went to discuss the matter. As he could not speak Italian and Duse could not speak English, Isadora was to serve as the interpreter.

"I want a little bourgeois room," Duse explained, "with a small window opening on a country garden."

Isadora translated.

"Rubbish!" snorted Craig. "I will do something entirely different."

"What does he say?" demanded Duse.

"He says," the dancer improvised rapidly, "that you have, wonderful ideas."

Not until the dress rehearsal did the actress see the stage set designed by Gordon Craig. The bourgeois room had become a magnificent and beautiful place. The windows were long and they did not open out on a country garden. Instead, they created an illusion of opening out on the whole world. For Craig was the first to give the impression of vast horizons and limitless space.

Once when he was looking at my sculptures, he said: "These are wonderful. But, my dear, are you able to give the world a beautiful child?"

At this moment we heard small steps, and the double doors were pushed open. A little four-year-old boy stood there, framed in the doorway, with gold curls and dark eyes. It was like a prearranged theatrical effect, and Craig was electrified.

"Yes," he said, answering his own question, "you can give the world a beautiful child."

4

In 1923 we moved to Vienna where Barjansky was going to give a series of mid-European concerts. The war had corroded the heart of Vienna, and there was grim poverty and hopelessness among vast numbers of the people. But outwardly it was a flourishing time. The theaters were wonderful, the concerts a joy, the opera excellent.

Somehow one cannot speak of Vienna without mentioning the quality of charm that made it unique. It was a warm, joyous quality. The Viennese were hospitable in a way that was peculiarly their own; it gave one the same feeling one has from lighted windows on a winter night, or a door flung wide open, or the welcoming smile of a friend. Conversation was a delight in Vienna, combining a French sparkle with Austrian warmth.

Vienna was primarily a musical town; not merely a town of concerts and concertgoers, nor a town of professional musicians. But everyone turned to music as a necessary part of his

life. After dark you would see people walking through the streets carrying instruments. The doctors and the dentists, the lawyers and the businessmen, rounded off their day by playing quartets and trios.

At that time Arthur Schnitzler was a dominating figure in the intellectual life of Vienna.

"How is it," a Viennese friend asked me, "that you have not done Schnitzler's portrait?"

"I should love to do it," I replied. "But I do not know him and I have no way of meeting him."

"Nonsense," the friend replied, "it is perfectly easy. We will give a dinner party and put you on his right."

And so I found myself sitting beside a small man with a large head and a heavy lock of hair that fell over his forehead like Napoleon's. He had a beard, half white and half brown, and faithful and beautiful dark-blue eyes.

At once he plunged into conversation about Russia, pouring out a flood of eager questions.

"You do not know," I told him, "what an enormous part your work played in my very early youth in Russia."

"How is that possible?" he asked.

"When I was twelve, my parents took me to the theater to see your play, *Fairy Tale*. They were misled by the title and thought it was a children's entertainment, while it was really the story of a woman whose fiancé jilted her because she had had a love affair. I was at an age where the play opened my eyes on a great many things."

Schnitzler was greatly amused and, seeing him in this good humor, I took my courage in my hands.

"I want to do your portrait. I could do it in very few sittings."

"No, I can't," Schnitzler protested quickly. "It makes me nervous. Three times I have posed for painters. No, I can't. I can't. I can't."

He was a writer and I thought I must give him a literary image; so I began to talk about Rodin. "You know," I said,

"when Rodin went to Rome he fell in love with the city. But he could not really grasp its essence until he had done a bust of the Pope."

Schnitzler looked at me, puzzled.

"You see," I went on, "while this is not Rome and I am not Rodin, I feel that I shall never be able to capture the true quality of Vienna until I have done the portrait bust of Arthur Schnitzler."

He looked at me and laughed. "Well," he said, "when shall I begin to sit for you?"

"Tomorrow," I answered promptly.

"Tomorrow? No, that is impossible." He hesitated for a moment. "Day after tomorrow," he decided.

And so I came to the little house where Schnitzler lived, a charming place furnished with Biedermeier.

"Do you mind if I walk up and down the room?" the playwright asked me.

"Of course not."

"Or if I write?"

"Do as you like."

"I prefer to write standing up," he said, and stationed himself beside the piano, leaning on it. And while he wrote he ran his fingers nervously through his hair so that I could not even see his face.

I sat on the sofa and began to model, waiting for a glimpse of his features. After a while he put down his pencil and began to walk up and down the room. Then he drew a chair up beside the sofa and began to talk about Russian literature and to ask how I liked *Anna Karenina*. As we talked on and on, he forgot about his writing and sat facing me so I could do his portrait.

As the sittings progressed, we became friends, and we talked of many things. The plan was to go to him at eleven in the mornings and work for an hour or so. But soon I stayed to lunch with him and his two children, then I began joining him on his afternoon walk, so before the bust was done I was practically spending the whole day with him.

After the sixth sitting, when the portrait was done, I said, "Thank you for your patience."

"So you just send me away!" he protested, and he in turn began to visit us frequently. And when he left us something remained—an idea, a kind thought, a creative impulse. Always, after talking with Schnitzler, I was eager to work, and there is no better gift that can be made to the creative artist.

In his busy lifetime he was not only a physician but a novelist and a playwright. Constant demands were made on his time by his friends. When I lunched at his house he was called to the telephone many times.

"For heaven's sake," I exclaimed, "do people never leave you in peace?"

"But what more unimportant time could they choose," he asked, "than when I am eating?"

Like other doctors who have become writers, he had deep insight into people. I remember his speaking once of an actress whom I had seen play a very dramatic part. Something in the performance had disappointed me, but I did not know exactly what was lacking.

"What she lacks," Schnitzler told me, "is shamelessness. She always keeps something back. She is shy about some parts of her soul. She will never be truly great until she is able to give everything."

Once I met him during the intermission of a mediocre concert.

"How do you like it?" he asked.

"I am terribly bored."

"Bored?" he protested. "You are too young, my dear. From the time I passed sixty, I have enjoyed every moment of my life and nothing has bored me. *Ich bin nicht blasirt.*"

It was Schnitzler who introduced me to the brilliant intellectual world that flourished then in Vienna. At that time there

were salons like those that had existed in Paris before French society became bored with ideas and devoted itself to a search for bizarre forms of amusement. Here in Vienna, artists, scientists, and other creative people congregated. One of the most interesting of these salons was at the home of Alma Maria Mahler, widow of the famous composer. Twenty years younger than her famous husband, she was extremely beautiful, young, blonde, and very feminine. After Mahler's death she married the celebrated German architect Gropius and was later divorced. She is now the widow of Franz Werfel and lives in California.

Alma Mahler was always surrounded by creative men. She had an unusual talent for inspiring people, making them eager to express themselves, and she held court in much the same way that Cosima Wagner had once done. Everyone who came to Vienna wanted to meet her.

Schnitzler took me to her house for a big party that had been arranged to hear a new composition, the *Pierrot Lunaire*, by the important modernist composer, Arnold Schoenberg. The room in which the party was held might comfortably have received fifty people, and that afternoon there must have been two hundred, none of whom I knew. Almost immediately Schnitzler was snatched away from me by his countless acquaintances, and I was alone in an enormous crowd, feeling very much at a loss.

Then I saw a blonde woman, large and tall, with deep blue eyes and a turquoise-blue velvet gown, sweeping toward me. She took me in her arms. "My dear," she said, "Schnitzler has told me all about you. You are welcome in my house, and we are going to be great friends." That was Alma Mahler, and in all the years I was to spend in Vienna I was deeply attached to her.

Not long after I had finished the portrait bust of Schnitzler, I met at a dinner party a pupil of Sigmund Freud, an American doctor named Joe Asch. He was one of the most charming and delightful persons I have ever known, intelligent and good, with

a strong sense of justice. Later, when I knew him better, I took all my problems to him. If I were not sure what was the right thing to do, he would always be sure to know.

I asked him whether I would be able to do a portrait of the great Freud.

"It is impossible," he said promptly. "Professor Freud is much too busy."

At that time Freud was old, and he had already had an operation for cancer of the gums, the disease of which he died later. He was not practicing psychoanalysis, he was devoting his time to teaching.

One day Dr. Asch said: "Professor Freud will pose for you tomorrow. You must be at his house at ten in the morning."

Promptly-at ten I rang the bell of his apartment. I was taken into a drawing room that looked like a doctor's waiting room. I waited nervously. Then the door opened, and a tall man with closely cropped mustache, dark, bright eyes, and white hair and small white beard came into the room.

He looked at me for a moment and said solemnly: "I was told that you are a wife and a mother. But I see a young girl."

For all the seriousness of his face I sensed the atmosphere of a joke. "My dear professor," I answered, "if you say I am a young girl, you must be right, because you know everything."

He took me into his study and sat down at a big desk. As I prepared my wax, I showed him some of my wax portraits, which I had brought in a little box. He glanced at the one of Schnitzler, put it down, looked fleetingly at several of the others and said casually, "Very good." Obviously, he was not impressed.

Then he picked up a photograph I had brought of my King Solomon. His eyes brightened. He studied it thoughtfully, and his face was illuminated.

"Tell me, does he look like your father?"

As my father was juvenile in appearance, with a round and boyish face, the idea of his resembling this old patriarch amused me.

"Oh, not at all," I said.

Freud's face fell. He was greatly disappointed. He looked at the photograph again. "Probably it looks like your grandfather," he said.

My grandfather had looked like my father, but this time I was afraid to disappoint Freud and to spoil his theories. "Yes," I said, "it looks a great deal like my grandfather."

I stole a glance at his face. It was placid once more and mildly triumphant.

He was discussing dreams when I told him that, not long before, my little son had waked up one morning to find me working in his room on a portrait.

"What are you doing, Mummy?"

"This is a portrait of Arthur Schnitzler."

"Who is he?"

"A writer—a poet."

"What is a poet?"

I tried to explain. He sat for a moment, looking far away. "You know," he said, "I think it must be very easy to be a poet. You just put down in the morning what you dream in the night."

Freud was delighted with this story and many years later in New York, a scientist came up to me at a party given by the Rockefeller Foundation. "I know your name," he said. "Professor Freud told me about you and the beautiful child who defined a poet."

CHAPTER TEN

A LATE LARK SINGING

WHENEVER I think of the English composer, Frederick Delius, I remember another great Englishman, the poet Henley, and his words:

So be my passing!
My task accomplished and the long day done,
My wages taken, and in my heart
Some late lark singing, -
Let me be gathered to the quiet west,
The sundown splendid and serene,
Death.

"Yes, that is how I want to go," Delius remarked when he heard the poem, and so we knew him, a late lark singing.

In the year 1923 in Vienna, Emil Hertzka, a charming and kindly man, who was a familiar figure to all Vienna because of his big beard, which made one think of Johannes Brahms, came to see my husband. Hertzka was head of the Universal Music Publishing Company, and he brought with him the score of a new cello concerto by Frederick Delius.

"If you like it," he said, "I will arrange to have you play the world première."

Barjansky was delighted, as there is little cello literature, and at once he began to study the concerto. The longer he worked on the score, the more enthusiastic he became. Sometimes he would come rushing into my room, take me away from my work

and drag me to the piano where he sang the cello part in a terrible baritone, exclaiming, "Isn't it beautiful?"

The concert at which the première of the concerto was to be given was held on January 30 in Frankfort, and Delius himself was present. Early in January my husband went to Frankfort, where he met Delius and worked on the concerto with him. It was a huge success. Delius was satisfied, the public enthusiastic, and the criticisms splendid.

"I was immensely happy," my husband told me shyly. "I think really that I did not play very badly."

That was almost the highest tribute Alexandre ever paid to his own work, for he was always dissatisfied and indescribably modest. He told me about the rehearsal. Not only Delius had been there, but Mrs. Delius, their old friend Percy Grainger, the Australian pianist, and Heinz Zimon, editor in chief of a Frankfort newspaper who later, in 1940, was murdered in Washington by an unknown person.

"After the rehearsal," Alexandre related, "Percy Grainger came to introduce me to Delius. 'Splendid; Barjansky, splendid,' he exclaimed. 'I am happy and absolutely satisfied.'"

"Would you like me to change anything?"

"No, no. Your tempi are perfect, and so is your interpretation."

After this first meeting with the Deliuses, my husband began a very animated correspondence with them, and two years later, when we left Vienna to live in Paris, I too met Mr. and Mrs. Delius. They were then living in Kassel, between Vienna and Paris, where Delius was taking a cure, and Mrs. Delius invited us to stay with them.

It was late in the afternoon when we reached the Kassel hotel on Wilhelmshöhe, where rooms had been reserved for us. Mrs. Delius was then about sixty, pretty and kind. Something radiant and happy seemed to emanate from her, and we instantly struck up a warm friendship that endured until her death.

The most striking thing about her appearance was her extreme fairness. Her skin was milk-white and baby-pink, her eyes a

pale blue-green, her hair gold-blond. She looked much younger than her years, tall, large, very feminine. She did not dress in a modish way, but in a manner that suited her, long, full dresses in light pastel shades, nearly always yellow and pale green, with bracelets and necklaces of Indian pearls and jade. Her appearance was artistic, and she gave an impression of being extremely *soignée*.

She greeted my husband warmly, as an old friend, and bent down to kiss me, her charm and warmth putting us at our ease.

"Delius is sleeping, he does not feel so well today," she told us. "But you will see him tomorrow morning. His male nurse is with him now, so I can walk a few steps with you in the park."

This was the first hint I had that Mrs. Delius was her husband's constant companion, his nurse, his attendant, his secretary, his mainstay. All the hours of the day and night she had no life of her own; she was at his command. And yet the shackles were not heavy for her; she seemed to be unaware of them, and in spite of her life of complete sacrifice, she appeared to be radiantly happy.

There are women who are happy only in bondage, and she was one of them, so utterly absorbed in her husband's career that she had even allowed her own genuinely fine talent for painting to rust. There was no place in the Delius ménage for more than one creative artist.

We walked slowly among the huge trees of the beautiful park that surrounds the hotel. Mrs. Delius told us that she was not sure that the cure was really good for her husband.

"It makes him very tired," she said. "He has lost weight, he grows weaker, and his sight is fading. He doesn't sleep well, his body is wracked with pain, particularly after the electric treatments they give him. He eats almost nothing. He doesn't like it here. How I should like to take him back to France, to our beloved house in Grez-sur-Loing! There he would be better off than in this hotel. I am sure it would help him to be at home. But it is terribly difficult for me to decide on the journey, be-

cause the doctor warns me that it might endanger his life."

The next morning after breakfast Mrs. Delius came to take us to their apartment, where we were to meet the composer. "He slept well last night," she said, "and he will be here in a few minutes."

Close to the steps of the terrace in the garden stood a wheel chair. We heard heavy footsteps, and Mrs. Delius ran to open the door. A young man, broad and strong, came in, carrying in his arms a big stiff doll. A little shiver ran down my back, and for a moment I felt almost frightened. He was carrying the long, thin body of Delius bent over his shoulder, holding him by the legs. He set him in the wheel chair, and Mrs. Delius put a big Panama hat on his head to shield him from the sun.

"Sweetheart," she said, "the Barjanskys are here."

Delius was a ghost, emaciated, bloodless, his long body as stiff as a corpse. There was great spiritual beauty in his face, the forehead high and noble, the eyes unusually deep-set, the eyelids heavy and half closed, the nose thin and aquiline, the mouth fine and beautiful in shape. His narrow pale hands lay helpless on his knees. His gray hair was long, so long that it fell over the open collar of his white silk sport shirt, revealing his long thin neck with a large Adam's apple. He did not wear a necktie; his suit was of light Shantung; his shoes were white suède. Everything about his appearance betrayed the great and thoughtful care his wife had given it. And despite his helplessness, he looked extremely elegant. I realized that he was almost completely paralyzed.

He turned his head in our direction and put out his stiff right hand. Good heavens—the man was blind!

"I am very happy that you came, Barjansky."

His hand lay stiff in the hand of my husband. He could not even move his fingers. His voice sounded lifeless. He began to discuss with my husband the cello concerto which he wanted Alexandre to play with the London Philharmonic, and while they talked I observed his profile, which was sharply designed

and bore a certain resemblance to the profile of Frederick the Great.

"Darling, Mrs. Barjansky is here, too," Mrs. Delius said.

Again Delius extended his right hand, and I took it in mine—strange to touch that cold dead hand.

"Can you see her, darling?" asked Mrs. Delius.

"No," Delius replied sharply.

"He doesn't see very well today," she said kindly. She never seemed to admit to Delius, to his friends, even to herself, that the man was utterly and hopelessly blind.

"Would you like me to describe Mrs. Barjansky and her little boy?" She did so, clearly and truly.

"You are a painter," I said.

"Not any more," she replied. "That was in the past. When you come to me in Grez I will show you my paintings, if you are interested. Now, Fred, you must go to the doctor for the electric cure."

"Everything is awful here," said Delius petulantly. "The doctor is a donkey. He doesn't understand the first thing about my illness. The food is awful too. I hate being here."

"We will go to Grez soon," Mrs. Delius said mildly, "and you will get well there."

The male nurse came and pushed the wheel chair away, while Mrs. Delius walked beside it, describing with her tireless patience everything his dead eyes could not see.

In the afternoon he felt worse, as a result of the treatments, and remained in bed. We sat in his room while he discussed music with my husband. He spoke sharply and said many cruel things about music and musicians, but everything he said was highly intelligent, interesting, and sometimes extremely funny.

He described his first meeting with the great Spanish cellist, Pablo Casals. Casals invariably played the complicated C major suite for cello by Bach, with which, as a modernist, Delius had little patience. "Because Casals is Spanish," Delius said, "I expected him to be tall and dark, with burning eyes and a mane

of black hair. I wouldn't have been particularly surprised if he had worn a sombrero. And there came a short, stout, blond man without a hair on his head and played the C major scale!"

I had some wax with me and I began to model his expressive face, though I asked Mrs. Delius not to let him know it. Because he was so completely motionless it was easy to model him, and during the two hours we spent in his room, while his attention was wholly absorbed by his conversation with my husband, I could move around him without his noticing it and model him from every side.

That night we left for Paris. The little wax head, of course, was not finished, but we promised to come to their country place in France as soon as Mrs. Delius was able to have her husband moved.

Several weeks later, we received a letter from a friend saying that Delius was in such bad health that it was unlikely he would live a month. A fortnight after that, a letter came from Mrs. Delius, bearing a French postmark. They were in their home at Grez-sur-Loing, she said, and she was once more at ease. Delius had lost weight every day in Kassel, the doctor declared that there was nothing to be done, and she took the chance of bringing him home where she felt sure she could bring him back to life. The journey had been tragic. She and the male nurse did everything they could, but Delius was going. Now, with God's help, he was at home. He already looked better, though he was still confined to his bed.

"But," she added, "as soon as we are able to take him into the garden, I will write you and you must come."

And about a month later we arrived in Grez-sur-Loing.

We found ourselves in a little French village with small white houses, narrow streets, and an old Norman church. The fields and forests and the river Loing recalled the paintings of Corot, who knew and loved this village and often worked there.

Cézanne too is said to have painted Grez, and Robert Louis Stevenson lived there at one time, and proposed to his Fanny on the little bridge. In the past Stevenson and the Deliuses had been great friends.

Life passed quietly and peacefully in this little corner of France, almost unchanged from the way it had been a hundred years ago. People awakened at sunrise, and by seven o'clock in the evening the streets were deserted and everyone had gone to bed. Grez-sur-Loing had never heard of the machine age. There were no electric lights, no telephones, no automobiles, no motion pictures. But there was peace, contentment, well-being, and much beauty. It was a good place for artists, who have so little need for machines.

In the middle of the village was a main road on which stood the Norman church, and next to the church a large old house, white and pink, with white roses climbing up the wall. The big house door and the window frames were painted blue. This was Delius's house.

The windows were all closed, as was the entrance door. The house was quiet, half asleep like the whole village. No one could guess that behind the blue door was a strange world full of flowers and music, the world Mrs. Delius had created for her dangerously ill, paralyzed, and blind husband. When the door opened, we saw a wild garden filled with sunflowers, roses, hollyhocks, so rich in color that it looked like an oriental rug or the *décor* for a Russian ballet. Huge old trees stood among the flowers, forming a wonderful garden that sloped gradually toward the river Loing. The river was quiet and gray-blue, with a boat tied to a tree, a boat in which, on very hot days, Delius was placed in his wheel chair to row for hours on the river. Here Delius had lived for thirty years, and here he had written his best music, his *Mass of Life*.

We found him sitting in his wheel chair, and at first glance we could tell that his wife had been right in taking the risk of bringing him home. He looked much better, and he had gained weight. He was, of course, still paralyzed and motion-

less, but the terrible corpselike look had gone. As usual, he was dressed with great care, a heavy English plaid flung over his knees. His fine head rested on a white pillow, and his deep blue eyes were wide open, seeming to look inside himself.

For long hours he sat listening to the silence of his garden, a silence filled with the murmur of the wind moving the leaves of the trees, and with the conversation of birds and insects, and the whispering of the river. And he was happy. Much was gone but his wonderful intelligence remained with him, and the most important of his senses—his hearing.

Mrs. Delius had made herself an executive whose job was that of organizing a comfortable and happy life for her husband. Under her supervision two cooks prepared the meals. She herself made the butter early in the morning, churning the fresh heavy cream for hours. Bread was baked in their own oven, coffee was sent from Spain, beer from Germany. Their cellar was filled with rare French wine.

Delius ate little, but that little was epicurean. Every day Mrs. Delius went to Fontainebleau in her small old car and selected food in the market: huge oysters, the finest vegetables, poultry, fish. Never have I eaten more wonderful meals than those served in that little French village.

When the wheel chair had been pushed to the dining table and the male nurse had stationed himself beside Delius, Mrs. Delius described to her husband, in the most delectable and attractive way, what he was eating, and the male nurse fed him as though he were a helpless baby. Most of the time at meals was spent in a never-ending argument between Delius and his wife. He liked wine, and the doctor would not allow him to have it. With wonderful patience his wife explained for the thousandth time that if he would only follow the doctor's orders he would soon be able to walk and see and eat and drink as he pleased.

For his mind there were books. That too was a complicated department of Mrs. Delius's life. She ordered catalogues from French, English, and German publishers and was in constant

correspondence with them, ordering the books Delius might like. During the daytime the male nurse read to him in German. At night Mrs. Delius read aloud in English and French.

Then for his ears there was the radio, which at that time was imperfect and difficult to adjust. Sometimes in the middle of a concert that Delius was particularly eager to hear, the radio would become so noisy it was impossible to listen, or would simply stop altogether. Every morning Mrs. Delius carefully marked with a red pencil all the music in which Delius would be interested.

There were records too. All the new records appearing in London, Paris, Vienna, and New York were available for Delius each evening when they had no visitors.

But he needed also a magic that could not come from records and the radio. He needed real musicians. So Mrs. Delius carried on a heavy correspondence with all the great musicians of the world. They came to Grez and stayed for days in the Delius house: Sir Thomas Beecham, Howard-Jones, Percy Grainger, Elgar, and many others. They came and talked music and played his own compositions for him.

Mrs. Delius also wrote constantly to music publishers and conductors, so that there might be opportunities for his music to be played frequently. And for all this effort she sometimes had the reward of seeing her husband's pale smile when he heard one of his own works played over the radio in some foreign country.

The old-fashioned house was extremely cozy. The large dining-living room was on the ground floor, level with the garden. There were easy chairs covered with light chintzes; a large portrait of Delius, painted by his wife when he was young and healthy, hung on the wall over the desk where Mrs. Delius carried on her unending correspondence. A large round dining table of polished mahogany stood in the middle of the room, above which hung a petroleum lamp.

On the floor above were the bedrooms and guest rooms. Everything was plain and comfortable. On the other side of

the house was a huge library, containing two pianos. All around the walls were shelves filled with books and scores, and on one wall a large painting by Gauguin, *Nevermore*. It was a recumbent nude, a Tahitian woman, with a raven at the window.

Mrs. Delius's own paintings were like herself, clear, healthy, smiling. The subjects were children, or a mother with children, or landscapes, or a few excellent portraits. She belonged to the school of Georges Seurat, the French school of *plein air*. Everything was painted with little points; the French call it *punctualisme*. I do not know whether she really studied with Georges Seurat, who was one of the great painters of her youth, and whose technique became identified with the school of neoimpressionism. Many of her paintings hung on the walls of the house. And I remember that in the room I occupied was hung her large painting of a garden, light green, with spots of sun, and a young woman sitting on the grass playing with a baby. There was warmth, sincerity, and a brilliant strong talent in her canvases. I feel convinced that if she had not involved her life with the complicated one of Frederick Delius and submerged herself entirely, she would have become one of the great painters of her time.

Her best canvases hung in the library. I discovered that the Gauguin was a copy that she had made. Delius had bought an original Gauguin in Paris years before. During the first war he ran into financial difficulties, and Mrs. Delius copied the painting and sold the original, thus saving them from disaster. Near the window stood a bronze by Rodin, one of the "Bourgeois de Calais."

As a rule, friends came to the Deliuses after five o'clock tea. Delius was wheeled into the library and placed in an old easy chair where he sat listening to the music. When he grew tired, Mrs. Delius would have him taken to his bedroom, next to the library. The door was left open, and he could hear the music late into the night.

All this was during the tranquil days when Delius was feeling well. But there were other days when his body was racked

with pain, and he made convulsive movements, and the whole atmosphere of the house became one of catastrophe. It was after such a day, when Mrs. Delius had exhausted herself in her constant efforts to make her husband comfortable, that I was awakened in the middle of the night. In the absolute silence of the village and of the house, I heard Delius's sharp voice calling, "Are you asleep, Jelka?"

"Of course not," she replied in a voice blurred with sleep.

"Come and read to me. I am in pain."

"I am coming," she answered quickly. And she read to him until six o'clock in the morning.

My husband, my son, and I spent the whole summer at Grez, in a small apartment that we rented in the house of rich peasants. After so many years in cities, we loved the beauty and the quietness of the French village. Often we walked through the fields to the next village, Marlette. And always we stopped in the middle of the old bridge, so pure and beautiful in its lines, watching the river flowing quietly below, the wonderful banks, the old trees, all enveloped by silence! And then we would go to the Deliuses for tea in their garden where multitudes of colors from the flowers reflected the rays of the setting sun.

Delius loved this tea hour. He was brought from his bedroom into the garden after a rest. But the tea must be prepared in a certain way. I remember he once heard the cook approaching the table with some cookies.

"Is the tea ready, Madame Grespier?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Have you let it brew four minutes?"

"Certainly, Monsieur Delius."

"Are you sure that it is really four minutes?"

"Surely, Monsieur Delius; four, even five minutes," replied Madame Grespier.

"But why did you let it brew five minutes when I told you it must be exactly four?" he demanded, very angry.

"Sweetheart, the tea is perfect," his wife intervened.

Sometimes musicians like Percy Grainger and Balfour Gardi-

ner came from London. Then there would be discussions and disputes about music.

On one such occasion Mr. Gardiner, an old bachelor with white hair, a red face, and baby-blue eyes, very English and very stubborn, spoke so violently against jazz that his face became twice as red as usual. He nearly suffocated with anger. There was a brief silence after his long and fiery monologue, and then Mr. Delius's clear voice said: "Jelka, we have some jazz records. I'd like to hear some of them."

And Mr. Gardiner, who had loved him nearly all his life, listened quietly.

One morning Mrs. Delius came to us in excitement. "Guess what has happened," she began. "Fred told me this morning that he could see a little. He could see his own hands. What do you think? Do you suppose he will really regain his sight?"

As she turned hastily to return to her husband I saw that she was wearing her prettiest dress. She was ready in case he could see her. But his sight never returned.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ONLY ONE HAPPINESS

WHILE Jelka Delius, in her selfless devotion, lavished upon her husband every comfort and attention, she was unable to provide the essential, all-embracing need of the creative artist. "There is only one happiness in life," Delius had said, "and that is the happiness of creating."

Even there she had been of service in the early stages of his paralysis, writing down the notes at his dictation, for he could not move his hand to write. But now he was blind as well and could not see to correct the notes, which meant that he must carry the whole score in his memory. To increase the difficulties, already almost insuperable, in the way of composing, Delius lacked any method of expressing the melodic phrase he had conceived in his mind. He could not sing it. His voice was a flat monotone, a toneless whistle that could not convey his meaning. Obviously, his creative work was over; but the tragedy for Delius lay in the fact that while he no longer had any way of communicating his musical ideas, they continued to take shape and grow in his mind, where, apparently, they must be stifled for lack of any means of expressing them.

And then in August, 1928, Mrs. Delius wrote to me. "A miracle has happened," she related. "A young man will come from England. He is a composer of music and will help Fred to compose. It is quite exciting. I do not know if he will succeed. He wrote to us quite enthusiastically and offered to dedicate two years of his life to working with Fred. This boy lives in Scarborough. At first we thought he wished to escape from his

parents' house, but then we decided to let him come, and I wrote him that Delius is greatly touched and should love to accept his offer."

So Eric Fenby appeared in the Delius household at Grez-sur-Loing. He was a slim young English lad, with eyeglasses, brown hair, brown eyes, very quiet. All of Delius's friends were baffled at the prospect of this unsophisticated and conventional boy learning to adapt himself to the atmosphere of the composer's home. No one believed that he would be able to work with Delius, or that the latter would be able to compose with his help. It seemed to everybody that it would prove to be a hopeless and disappointing experience.

And for weeks it was hopeless and disappointing. Young Fenby, desperately eager to succeed in his undertaking, not only could not follow the composer's attempts to whistle and hum his musical ideas, but he could not identify himself with the other's feelings and thoughts. And then the miracle happened. A fusion of ideas was effected and the compositions began to take shape. Fenby sent the scores to Sir Thomas Beecham, who was delighted.

"Beautiful! Lovely!" exclaimed Sir Thomas. "But how the devil did you manage to get it down on paper?"

And Fenby replied, with magnificent understatement, "Extracting music from the brain of a Delius is not one of the easiest jobs."

"No, I should think not. I believe, my dear Fenby, that you ought to be a cabinet minister."

Delius was as aware of the difficulties as young Fenby could possibly be, and cautioned him over and over, "Take your time." Fenby, in the touching book which he later wrote on Delius, recounted:

This insistence on one's taking one's time was a point which I have heard him stress over and over again, as of the greatest importance in all fine work. How could one always see at first sight the possibilities dormant in an idea, and relevant to the feelings

one wanted to express? He told me that though one could never foresee precisely what the finished work would be like, yet one should always have some definite goal in mind, and never take one's eyes off it. Whether one achieved it or not, of course, was another matter. Yet good work always shaped itself according to the laws of its own inner being.

Musical friends in London were greatly excited over this unbelievable collaboration, and I believe Fenby brought the greatest luck that Delius knew in his last years. At what a cost to himself it is difficult to hazard a guess, for Delius was shocked and disturbed by the slightest lack of understanding. The faintest phrase that did not fit the atmosphere or that jarred on his mood would freeze him; he made no allowances for people. Sometimes musicians came to play his own compositions for him, and if they played badly he would interrupt in the middle of a phrase and say, "Jelka, give them some tea and take me away."

Often a knock at the street door was followed by the voice of some journalist or musician asking to see him, and if he were not in the mood he would cry loudly, "Say that I am not at home."

A year after Fenby came to Delius's house, the Delius Society in London, of which Sir Thomas Beecham was president, decided to give a festival of Delius's work. The composer was torn between his desire to go to London where he would have an unparalleled opportunity to hear his own orchestral work, which he knew only over the radio, and his constant fear of dying away from Grez. For days he discussed the matter pro and con, and then one day a taxi drew up to the blue door, and there was Sir Thomas Beecham, smiling broadly, a big cigar in his mouth, and a stack of scores in his arms. He took the matter into his own hands and persuaded Delius to travel to London by ambulance.

The festival was a great event, consisting of four orchestral and choral concerts in Queen's Hall and two chamber concerts

in Aeolian Hall. After his quiet years in a French village, Delius found himself surrounded by admiring friends, receiving tremendous ovations.

It was a great tribute to the dying composer but as soon as the Festival was over, Delius, exhausted by the effort he had made, urged his wife to take him back to Grez and the life he knew and loved.

My husband and I went to America, and for two years we did not see the Deliuses, though Jelka wrote long letters that brought us the familiar atmosphere of Grez. And then came the tragedy.

In May, 1934, Jelka Delius wrote: "I am in Fontainebleau and will be in a clinic—will be operated tomorrow, and you can imagine what it means to me to leave Fred with the male nurse alone in that big house."

Mrs. Delius was suffering from cancer, but it was typical of her that she thought only of her husband and his need of her. Fortunately for both these desperately ill, elderly people, young Fenby again rushed to the rescue. He found Delius in despair. For the first time since his marriage, his wife, bodyguard and guardian angel, had failed to stand beside him like a wall, to save him from mental and physical pain. Twenty-four hours without her had shaken the ground under him. His fragile organism could not stand it, and it was apparent that he was sinking. To Fenby's astonishment and embarrassment, Delius was crying. The musician who had dominated his life and his wife, his friends and his surroundings, was now only a pathetically lost and unhappy old man.

Fenby tried to divert him, and all that night long read aloud Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. The next day word came from the clinic that Mrs. Delius had undergone the operation; it had been successful, and she would recover. Poor Fenby dashed from one sickbed to the other. Mrs. Delius had only one thought. Was her husband all right?

Delius was dying. Everything possible was done but without the mainstay of his wife's presence he was unable to live. The

doctors took the tremendous risk of bringing Mrs. Delius back by ambulance, very ill and weak after her operation, lifted her into a wheel chair and rolled her beside her husband's bed.

"I am here, sweetheart," she said, and took his hand.

"Jelka, I am glad," and he smiled his pale smile for the last time.

Jelka was taken to her own bed, and Delius, under morphine, slept for a few hours. Then they sent for Fenby. The composer's stiff hand lay in Fenby's until it grew cold. The young Englishman went to Mrs. Delius. "The agonizing gaze of that sick woman," he related, "was unforgettable, as she gradually lifted herself up on her side to look at me.

"My dear," I said, "be brave. Delius is dead."

"She did not speak or cry, but sank back on her pillows, momentarily dazed."

And Jelka Delius, with her task still unfinished, got up from her sickbed and took the reins into her own hands. She had one thing yet to accomplish—to arrange for Delius's funeral. They had decided long ago, he and she, that since he could not be buried in their garden, he was to be taken to England.

That night in Brussels, my husband and I heard the B.B.C. announcement of Delius's death, followed by a delightful passage from *Walk to the Paradise Garden*, one of his most poetical compositions. My husband left at once for Grez, where he, Balfour Gardiner, the schoolmaster of the village, and other friends, carried Delius to his temporary grave in the little cemetery at Grez. That was early in June, 1934.

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In February, 1935, Jelka Delius wrote asking us to come, saying it was terrible to be lonely. She was active again, arranging her husband's music, serving her beloved in his death as she had in his life. "My only joy throughout this whole time," she wrote, "is the album of Delius's records. These records are wonderful, and I urge you to get them as soon as possible."

In September I passed through the blue door of the old house again and saw the full splendor of the autumn flowers. Jelka came to greet me, not in mourning, but as usual wearing a light blue dress and a long amber necklace. Her hair was snow-white and for the first time in the years I had known her, I heard her speak aloud. During the lifetime of Delius, everyone had whispered.

That first evening we talked late, and listened to the Delius records. Jelka had become very thin and she walked slowly, but her smile was as warm as ever, though its radiance was dimmed.

The next morning I found her, as usual, sitting at her desk, writing. She was preparing for the funeral. Delius was to be buried at Limpsfield, near London. The churchyard was beautiful and cheerful, and he would lie under an old tree.

"Of course I must take him to England," she said. "He belongs to England, for he is one of the most important English composers."

"May I go to his grave?" I asked hesitantly.

She was pleased. "Of course, my dear. I will go with you. Let's take him some flowers." She gathered some big ripe dahlias, and we went slowly to the road, and past the old bridge, the fields, the big trees, and small white houses. At last we came to the little village cemetery and laid the dahlias with the other flowers that covered his grave. We remained there only a few minutes. She felt that she could find him more easily in the house and in the garden he loved than in these cold, unfamiliar surroundings.

Because she was tired from her fifteen-minute walk she lay down, and while I sat beside her she began to speak to me about her youth. She was Jelka Rosen, the granddaughter of Moscheles, and as a girl had lived in Paris with her mother, taking lessons in painting. Later she had gone to Fontainebleau with two friends. The three girls lived at a village inn and painted all day long. Staying at the same inn was a young English musician, Frederick Delius, who was seeking rest in the country air. The three girls—Julia Wolfthorn, later a noted

painter in Germany, Ida Gerhardi, a painter and musician, and Jelka Rosen—all fell in love with him.

Once, rowing on the river Loing, Delius and Jelka passed a wonderful wild garden that sloped down to the river. Impulsively they tied the boat to an old tree and climbed up the bank. For a long time they wandered through that old forgotten garden, walking with difficulty because the paths were completely overgrown with high weeds. In the center of the garden stood a white house, closed and deserted.

"This is a real paradise," said Jelka.

"It would be nice to live in that house," Fred replied. The trees were heavy with apples and pears that nobody bothered to gather. Everywhere there were wild flowers. And as they walked Delius whistled some musical phrases that later appeared in his score of *In a Summer Garden*.

When the summer was over, Delius left for Florida and the three girls returned to Paris. But Jelka remembered the garden and the house where Fred had thought that it would be nice to live, and two summers later she persuaded her mother to buy the place. Again the three girls painted through the summer days; and one afternoon there was a knock at the entrance door, and there stood Frederick Delius, carrying a suitcase.

He walked in, admired the garden, asked if he could have some tea and sandwiches, sent the girls scurrying around waiting on him, and decided that he would stay and write some music.

And so began the life of Fred and Jelka at Grez-sur-Loing. For it was Jelka whom Fred chose, and the other two girls packed their easels and their canvases and returned to Paris. Jelka and Delius, with a couple of servants, remained alone. And one day, after a walk in the woods and fields, they stopped on their way home at the office of the mayor of the little village, where Jelka became Mrs. Delius.

They lived together for more than forty years, traveling a lot, their favorite country being Norway to which they returned again and again. They knew the composer Grieg, whom Delius

admired and loved. They always had many friends, and their life was filled with interest. And as she told me about those happy days, Jelka's smile was radiant once more, for she was living them over again.

"Fred has many friends and admirers in England and Germany," she said. "He had the great luck to meet Sir Thomas Beecham, who became a devoted friend and promoter of Fred's music. I know that even now, when Fred has passed away, he will play his music as long as he lives, for he loves it sincerely."

Later, in May, 1935, Jelka wrote again:

MY DEAR KATIA,

I waited for you the whole time and I was all alone, as I am also now, because Fenby has gone to England to arrange the funeral. I have not been at all well for quite awhile. I have decided to take Madame Grespier to England with me, leaving here Wednesday afternoon.

I will spend the night in Paris in the Hôtel de Bourgogne, which is behind the Chambre des Députés and will then proceed Thursday to London, via Folkstone, arriving at five-twenty in the afternoon. I will live there with Mrs. O'Neill [the widow of Norman O'Neill, the composer, and a friend of the Deliuses for many years]. I will spend two days with her to have a rest.

The funeral will be in Limpsfield, Sunday afternoon at four. Then I shall go again to Mrs. O'Neill for a few days—will stay in London as short a time as possible, because I so need silence and rest. Fenby has been terribly busy with all the preparations. He will come back to Grez Saturday evening and then on the 25th will bring the coffin by automobile to Boulogne and proceed directly to Limpsfield, Surrey. Afterwards he will remain in London, where he will study conducting.

I should like to have a nurse-companion, because I can't bear this staying alone and being so sick. Oh, it is always so terribly cold! No spring at all. The whole of life seems so cold to me now. I am so delighted that your husband is to have a concert in London. He must come to see me at Mrs. O'Neill's.

In my devoted friendship,

YOUR
JELKA

That was her last letter to me. My husband wrote to her that he was ill and unable to come to England. His letter was returned, opened by Mrs. O'Neill, who wrote:

I read your letter to Jelka, but she was too ill to understand it. She traveled, a dying woman, was taken from Dover to London to a nursing home last Friday and died this morning, the 28th of May, at eleven-fifteen. The whole thing was tragic.

The funeral of Delius had been held the day before. Jelka, to her grief, could not attend, but Sir Thomas Beecham, who conducted the orchestra which played Delius's music at the cemetery, had records made of the whole ceremony, and that night brought them to the nursing home to play them for Mrs. Delius.

Her work was done then, and she died. So the grave of Delius was opened, and Jelka was forever with him.

CHAPTER TWELVE

CURVED LINES

IN 1925 we were again in Paris. It was a very different city from the one we had known before the war. The era of mad extravagance had gone. We noticed it in little things. For instance, it had been fashionable in that old world to nibble at your food, however epicurean it might be. But during the war years there had not been enough to eat, and people remembered that. Now everyone ate every scrap of food on his plate.

There no longer seemed to be the old feverish search for bizarre forms of amusement. It was, in some ways, as though a window had been flung open and a gust of fresh air had swept through a closed, smoke-filled room. Ideas were once more in fashion. In short, Paris had become more interesting, more invigoratingly intellectual. Creative people were replacing mere entertainers.

In Passy, Madame Paul Clemenceau, an Austrian by birth, and sister-in-law of the "Tiger," gathered about her each Sunday the Parisian intellectuals, scientists, politicians, and the men and women of the theater. She was a short, white-haired woman with a beautiful face and I greatly enjoyed doing her portrait. At her gatherings one met such people as Painlevé, Einstein, Bruno Walter, Paul Géraudy, and Franz Werfel.

At that time Colette was living in an enchanting little house on the Boulevard Suchet. On the main floor a dining room and living room opened out on the smallest garden I have ever seen, but it was filled with flowers and plants. There was even a little fountain and a flowering arbor. Upstairs were her boudoir and

bedroom. The whole house was bathed in sunshine, filled with light and gaiety. Big windows looked out over a plain and far away on the horizon you could see the woods.

On her writing table were stacks of blue paper covered with her large handwriting. She was writing her book *Chéri*, and the wastebasket was filled with crumpled blue sheets and with letters that Colette had not troubled even to open.

Her life had changed since the days in Rome. She was separated from the Baron de Jouvenel, her second husband, and living alone in the little house on the Boulevard Suchet. Suffering from the separation, she devoted herself entirely to her writing. *Chéri*, with its sequel, *La Fin de Chéri*, were her masterpieces. She was at the peak of her career, regarded as the first writer of France because of her exquisite style. Everywhere she was in demand for articles, speeches, and interviews. One of the latter I remember particularly. Edmond Jaloux interviewed her.

"Tell me, Colette," he said. "What do you need for your inspiration?"

"I don't know," she replied, and then after a moment's thought: "Yes, I know. I need curved lines."

"What do you mean?"

Then Colette tried to explain in her low, beautiful voice, which had so many shades and colors in it. "We are all surrounded by straight lines. Our houses, our streets, our rooms are cubes. I need the lines of the horizon, of branches of trees, of the waves of the sea. That is what I mean by curved lines."

She needed nature, the woods, the fields; and the sea. There she found real freedom of thought. It was from simple things that she drew her inspiration, simple things that she knew and understood, as she knew the animals about which she wrote so engagingly. When she describes animals, they become small Colettes, because she attributes to them her own thoughts, and because she is herself a strange and inspired animal. Her animals all have human feelings, they love, they get angry, jealous, and

vindictive. She writes of them as though they were people, and her pen is dipped in magic.

Here is a fragment of a letter which she wrote me:

This morning, half awake, I went out on the terrace of my bedroom on the first floor and leaned against a wall, as high as my chin, to look at the sea, and for a long time I did not move. When I looked down, I saw, a few inches from my chin, a long green lizard, which was prudently keeping very still. We stared at one another for a long time, then he lost countenance, and went away on tiptoe.

On a hot summer day I lunched in Colette's house on the Boulevard Suchet. The window was open, the shades were half drawn, and from the little garden drifted the fragrance of flowers. The quiet was broken suddenly by the sound of an automobile stopping outside the house. The bell rang and Colette, who had been sitting at her desk, stiffened alertly. It was not customary for a caller to arrive unannounced.

Her maid, Pauline, came in. "Madame, the lady is here."

"What lady?"

"The lady writer. She called you up every day last week; she wrote to you every day; and she came here three times."

"Tell the lady writer that I am not at home."

"It is impossible," insisted Pauline. "You promised to receive her today."

"I promised?" Colette sighed. "It seems to be inevitable. Let the lady writer come in. And you," she said to me, "look at your watch and if she doesn't go in fifteen minutes, shout fire."

In came a superelegant lady of a certain age with a birdlike face, a sharp nose, and restless blue eyes. In spite of the stifling heat, she wore long white gloves, an elaborate black dress, a long coat, and a big velvet hat perched precariously on tinted yellow curls. She fumbled nervously with a crocodile bag.

Colette greeted her, introduced me, and asked her to sit down.

The lady writer arranged her dress with fluttering hands, and peered with open curiosity at everything in the room. Colette returned her look with equal curiosity. They were a strange contrast: Colette, stout and natural in manner, wearing a simple white linen dress, with sandals on her bare feet, and wild, ash-colored curls above intelligent eyes; and this complicated, self-conscious woman, attempting to be young and artificial, embellished with everything that Paris and the last word of fashion could provide.

"What can I do for you?" Colette asked her.

The lady writer began to speak, very loud and very fast, balancing the crocodile bag, fingering the big velvet hat. It was the hundredth anniversary of George Sand, she said, and a club of women writers had sent her to ask Colette, the glory and the pride of French literature, to write an article and make a speech at the opening of their next session. "Naturally," went on the carefully rehearsed speech, "we know that nobody could understand the romantic soul of George Sand as well as the romantic soul of Madame Colette."

Colette sat at her writing table, her chin resting on her hands, her eyes sparkling. I thought uneasily that they had the same expression her French bulldog wore before he sprang.

"I can't do what you ask," she said in her slow, quiet voice, "I am very sorry, but I can't do it. You see, I have never read George Sand."

The lady writer's eyes widened, her mouth gaped until we could see the gold teeth at the back. Colette viewed this disarray with considerable satisfaction, and then, taking pity on her guest, she added, reassuringly, "But you know, I will read George Sand—sometime when I am older and have more leisure." The lady writer went away, deeply offended.

Shortly after this I was to give an exhibition of my sculptures in Paris, and one day I received a telephone call from Colette. "Come to see me this afternoon," she said. "I have a surprise for you." When I arrived, she thrust into my hands some sheets of the familiar blue writing paper. It was an article which she had written about my art:

Born of an art that is minute but not quaint, of a feminine severity and malice without meanness, of a fantasy curbed and armed by the most solid technique: such are the works of Catherine Barjansky.

Their author is a somewhat mysterious young woman. She must be called a "person of quality," as one used to call those who knew everything without having learned anything; otherwise we would be forced to call her a magician and admit that she is suspected of heresy. For the strangest life seems to beat and breathe in these wax portraits, a life that art alone and the gift of creating resemblances could not alone have captured. Alive, alive—how alive they are! "Indeed, it is life itself!" exclaimed the young painter invented by Edgar Poe when he stole her last breath from his beloved to animate a portrait. Catherine Barjansky does not take life from her models. Her sorcery does better; she adds to the resemblance a little of what we all try—out of modesty, out of prudence—to keep hidden. Jean Lorrain would have called one of these wax portraits, a "portrait of the soul"; for example, the head with the eyes closed, bending before the tide of music, which seems to delegate all its power to a prodigious hand, contracted, thinking, acting: I am speaking of the head and the hand of a great violin-cellist.

Another portrait of a soul, that of the composer Delius, contemplating, from under lowered eyelids, an inaccessible world.

But do not think that the flesh loses its rights here! Substance as fragile as tinted wax is made to delight with a breast, a naked leg; to imitate lovingly the elastic nudity of a child's body. An artist as complete, as unique as Catherine Barjansky must take a voluptuous pleasure in creating little naked Venuses and modern nymphs. She was born exacting, and it is not enough for her merely to unveil the soul if the body does not yield its secret to her. In Rome, which loved her; in Vienna, and in Paris, which misses her and calls her back, she has left surprising effigies. In Vienna, Catherine Barjansky caught Freud's inner expression, his most profound thought. In Paris, the great Bourdelle revealed to her his mask of a wise pagan with watchful eyes. I myself consented, without realizing it, to a severe psychological examination the day she made a portrait of me, in which in full face the painted eye is sociable, but which in its hard profile denies the affability of the face.

One cannot pay too much attention to the work of Catherine Barjansky, or display too much defiant admiration for an art that,

employed with wise indiscretion, creates of a mediocre face an unforgettable one.

In the midst of reading the article, touched and pleased, I looked around for Colette. She had gone out of the room, but I caught her reflection as she peered at me in a mirror to see what my response would be to her article. Later it was printed as an introduction to the catalogue for my exhibitions both in Europe and in America.

2

Every year or two I returned to Paris, and my first action was always to call Colette. "Take a taxi," she would say, "and come at once." On one occasion she was living in an ultramodern penthouse apartment on the Champs-Élysées. She had married Maurice Gondeket, a journalist, gay, charming, and witty, with whom she was far happier than she had been either with Monsieur Willy or with the Baron de Jouvenel.

She was laughing when I came in. "I have stolen from a thief," she told me. "Last week I went to Saint-Tropez to put some of my things in order in my little house. I had a fairly large sum of money in my bag as I intended to pay several bills. On the street I met a woman and stood talking to her. Someone jerked my bag from my hand and I caught sight of a very tall man running away.

"Of course I informed the police, and some newspapermen came to interview me. I said that I had lost nearly three thousand francs. The next morning, fantastic stories of the robbery appeared in the newspaper. Then I received a letter, written in a disguised hand. 'I love your books too much,' it said, 'to be able to steal your money.' There were three thousand francs enclosed.

"He must be a professional thief who had removed the money from a number of handbags and thrown them away. He did not know how much money there was in each bag. I had told the

newspapermen I had nearly three thousand francs. Actually, it was 2,625 francs. So you see I have stolen 375 francs from the thief. If I only knew his address, I would send them back to him."

3

After two years in New York, I returned to Paris in 1932. I had not been there an hour when I met a friend who, with her eyes sparkling with the sort of malice people display in speaking of a divorce or a marriage, told me: "Colette has opened a beauty parlor. Haven't you heard about it?"

"Why not," I said, "if it amuses her? She likes to startle people."

She had been startling people all her life. In her youth, after marrying the author Willy, she suddenly transformed herself from a quiet housewife into a writer of the first caliber, with the four Claudine books that frankly shocked Paris. Later she went on the stage and danced and mimicked with great success for seven years. Still later she married Henri de Jouvenel, editor in chief of *Le Matin*. She had a child at the age of forty. She took charge of the literary section of *Le Matin*, where she ran a column called "The Critic of the Theater," wrote novels and plays and acted them on the stage. She was as full of surprises as Pandora's box.

Number 6 rue Miromesnil was a small white establishment, very elegant in its appointments. I opened the low narrow door and went in. A saleswoman told me that Madame Colette would appear in half an hour but if I had no appointment it would be impossible for me to see her. Nevertheless, I waited.

I was deep in my contemplation of the rooms when the door opened, as though blown by the wind, and Colette came in, accompanied by her black and white bulldog. She embraced me stormily, asked a thousand questions without hearing a single answer, and swept me along with her into a second room where a number of clients were waiting.

"Now you can see what I do," she told me. "Every woman

who leaves here looks as she should look. It amuses and interests me tremendously. I give up an hour a day to showing women the possibilities of their own faces. Watch me."

In a comfortable armchair a woman of thirty with negative features looked at Colette diffidently and hopefully. Colette studied her with cold appraisal. Under her skillful hands the eyes became deeper, larger, more expressive, the eyelashes longer. Colette was absorbed in her work. The mouth assumed a new expression, the insipid face became younger; yet there was nothing artificial, nothing painted, about it. I understood now what Colette had meant. "I make them look as they should."

A large woman wrapped in magnificent silver fox came next. Her hair had been dyed yellow, her cheeks tinted purple, and her eyelids deep blue. Colette looked at her like a surgeon before an amputation. "How terrible!" she stormed. "How illogical!"

A murmured protest led to a harsh expletive from Colette and, unable to stifle my laughter, I left the room. Even through the closed door I could hear the torrent of Colette's words, and then the large blonde appeared, fresh, beautified, more distinguished. Her face had lost its banal and masklike expression; she, too, had assumed her true physiognomy.

When the clients had gone I returned, and at once Colette began to work on me.

"Doesn't this tire you?" I asked.

"It is only an hour a day. In the morning I row on the lake in the Bois de Boulogne; in the afternoon I see my friends; I come here between four and five; and in the evenings I work on my new book. Then I travel a great deal, for I still give lectures."

"Why don't you go to America to lecture?"

"Why not?" and Colette laughed mischievously. "I am only sixty, and there is still time."

The last time I saw her was in Brussels, where she had been elected to fill the place in the Académie Royale de Langue et de Littérature Françaises left vacant by the death of the Comtesse de Noailles. It was customary to make a speech in honor of

the person one had succeeded, and Colette talked about Madame de Noailles. She did not discuss her as a poet, but as a woman; and she wrought her customary magic, evoking for all who heard her the fragile beauty and the personality of the dead poet, so that she lived again for an hour in that quiet hall. Colette spoke, as she often did, of her mother, the beloved Sido, who was a Belgian, so that on this visit to Brussels she talked not of "coming" but of "returning":

"So a long route, that of my life, a long experience, that of my heart, start from here, lead me here, and, in a way, settle me here. My instinct which delights in the curved line, in the sphere, and in the circle, is superstitiously satisfied. To incline toward the completed is to return to the point of departure. True adventurers do not return; but I am no true adventurer. The pioneer, the bold, the unbridled chimera, that is not I, that is she who is missing from our gathering, whom I cannot replace."

Among other things, Colette described a visit she had paid to Madame de Noailles, coming fresh from a walk in the Bois de Boulogne, to the dim room where the poet lay in semi-darkness.

It is like that one remembers Colette, flinging up the shades, letting in the light, bringing with her the health and the fresh air of the out-of-doors.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

OF PALACES AND KINGS

It was at the home of Madame Paul Clemenceau in Paris that I met a Belgian named Dupierreux, whom I had known in Rome. At the time he was secretary to Monsieur Destrée, the Minister of Fine Arts in Belgium.

Monsieur Dupierreux said, "What are you doing in Paris, Madame Barjansky? Giving exhibitions? Why don't you give one in Brussels?"

"Somehow it never occurred to me," I answered in surprise.

"You should do it," he said. "The Belgian people love sculpture."

A few weeks passed. On a morning in December I woke up thinking, "I must give an exhibition in Brussels." When my husband came into my room a little later I said quickly, "My dear, I have decided to give an exhibition in Brussels."

"But why?" he demanded. "You know no one there."

"I don't know why. But I have a feeling that it would be wonderful. Anyhow, the idea amuses me."

That settled it, and my husband shrugged his shoulders in resignation. At once I telephoned Dupierreux and told him that I wanted to give an exhibition in Brussels.

"Splendid!" he exclaimed. "I am going there today, and I will discuss it with the proprietor of one of the best galleries."

Three days later a letter came from the gallery asking me to arrange to hold my exhibition early in January. I packed seventy of my little portrait busts in a single suitcase, took my stands and glass cases, and all my preparations were made.

Three hours later we were in Brussels, and the following morning I went to the gallery to arrange for my exhibition.

The director met me, much perturbed. "I have not yet received your sculptures," he told me. "What can have happened to them?"

"Oh, I have them here in my suitcase," I replied to his astonishment. "All seventy of them!" And I showed him my miniatures.

All day long I worked, arranging the stands and the glass cases in which I placed the sculptures. The gallery was beautiful, well lighted, and two big rooms were enough to hold the seventy sculptures, which I placed about two yards apart, as art objects should never be crowded together.

The only person whom we knew in Brussels was Jules Destrée, and I was eager to do his portrait, so that I could have at least one Belgian represented among my subjects. He was an intelligent and cultured man with a most characteristic but ugly face, half of which was covered by a birthmark. The ugliness, however, was full of character and extremely pleasant, so it was a joy to model him.

Paul Gsell once quoted Rodin as saying: "What is ugly in art is what is false, what is artificial, what attempts to be pretty or beautiful instead of being expressive. . . . It is ugly because it lies. . . . The greatest difficulties for the artist who models a bust or paints a portrait do not come from the work they are doing. They come from the client who asks them to work. By a strange and fatal law, the person who orders his portrait always strives to do battle with the talent of the artist he has chosen. It is very rare for a man to see himself as he is, and even if he knows himself, he does not want an artist to picture him with sincerity. He always wants to be portrayed in his most banal and neutral aspect."

But Jules Destrée understood art and respected it, and it gave me great pleasure to do his portrait. He adored beautiful things, and he had a wonderful collection of Chinese furniture, while his library was famous in Brussels.

It was Sunday when I telephoned, asking whether he would allow me to do his portrait. His wife was giving a reception, and Destrée asked me to come. Madame Destrée's Sundays were famous not only because they attracted the most interesting people in Brussels but also because of the elaborate buffet and display of her culinary art, which kept people eating from three in the afternoon until dinnertime.

Destrée did not like these gatherings, and he withdrew from them to his library where he talked at leisure with one or two of his friends. He had an invigorating mind; he was not only an art enthusiast, but a diplomat, and a famous lawyer. He was also an ardent socialist. It was in his library that I did his portrait, while we argued about art and Russia, where he had spent two winters and which he hated with all his heart but described in an extremely amusing way.

My husband had accompanied me reluctantly to Brussels as he had a bad toothache, and his face was so swollen that it had become asymmetrical and lost its usual outlines. He was very bad-tempered indeed until it occurred to him that, aside from Destrée, he had another friend in Brussels, the celebrated violinist Ysaye. At once he brightened up and telephoned Ysaye, who asked us to come to him at once.

Ysaye lived in a typical Belgian house, with a kitchen and dining room for everyday use in the basement, a couple of drawing rooms and a dining room for special occasions on the first floor, private living rooms and family bedrooms on the second floor, and servants' quarters on the third floor.

Ysaye was as charming a person as one could meet. He was tall and large and stout, with long straight hair, beautiful features, gray-blue eyes, and great intelligence and goodness. At this time he was in his late sixties but he appeared young and he was still handsome. He was wearing a black velvet jacket, striped trousers, pumps on his feet, and he came in exuberantly, greeted my husband with shouts of delight, whirled around to talk to me about Russia, declaring that he loved it, and exclaiming, "*Caviar! O ma jeunesse!*"

He took Mischa on his knee and plunged into conversation with him so that they were soon laughing uproariously.

We had intended to pay only a short call, but Ysaye would not have it so, and at his insistence we were taken down to the basement dining room where the whole family was waiting: an older sister, one of his sons, a daughter, many grandchildren, and a young pupil whom he married a few years later. She was an American girl whom he had met when he was teaching in the United States. His first wife had recently died.

His hospitality was indescribable. He had always been lavish in his generosity and had never managed to hang on to any money. His house and his purse were at his friends' disposal. Only one key he clung to and that was the key to his cellar. In the midst of his dinner, he took this key from his belt and gave it to a servant with long and careful instructions, explaining the particular wine he wanted to offer us.

I asked if he would pose for me, and he agreed at once. So the next morning I came to him. He was on the second floor, in a big room with three or four windows overlooking a little garden.

"*Maitre*," I said, "I should like to do you with your left hand holding the violin."

"Of course."

"If you want to practice, please forget I am here while I work."

At that time Ysaye no longer appeared in concerts, but he practiced every morning, and he was in wonderful form. He lifted his violin and began to play as only he could play. It would have been perfect if I could only have found the expression I sought for my sculpture.

Then he began to play the Mendelssohn concerto and at last I found the ecstatic expression that only music can give. After that, whenever he posed for me he played the Mendelssohn. And now I cannot listen to it any more. I shall never again hear it as he played it. All the warmth and generosity of his nature was in his music. For he loved all the earthy and sensual

things: good food, the sun, children, beautiful women, rain, physical love.

After that we spent many evenings with him, and, with a pianist friend and my husband, Ysaye played trios. Ysaye enjoyed these evenings as much as we did, and poured into them all his exuberant love of living. The key to the cellar was given regularly to the servant and wonderful wines always appeared.

Unfortunately for Ysaye, he suffered from diabetes and he was not allowed to touch wine or sweets, which he loved. But often I saw him gulp down a huge piece of chocolate cake or a dozen candies if his family was not watching. His lusty nature was not one to be curbed and controlled. He did as he pleased.

Ysaye often talked to us about Queen Elizabeth of Belgium, who had studied the violin with him, and whom he adored. Belgium was an old-fashioned land. Everything centered about the throne. Half the newspapers seemed to be devoted to photographs of the royal family, or to accounts of their comings and goings, the exhibitions they had opened, the ceremonies they had attended, the charities they had sponsored.

Brussels is a delightful place, with broad and modern streets, well cared-for houses and, only five minutes' drive away, the forests. In the mornings the whole aristocracy went horseback riding for an hour, stopping at a little café in the woods where drinks and pastry were served. In the center of the town was the Grand' Place, with antique gilded houses in Gothic style.

The time came for my exhibition to open, and I was very nervous. I asked my husband not to come with me. "It will be empty," I told him. "After all, you were right. No one here knows me. No one will come."

To my amazement there was a large crowd. Hundreds of people appeared, most of them, I am sure, attracted by Colette's introduction to my sculptures, as she was immensely popular in Belgium.

The next day I received splendid criticisms, and I was soon busy filling commissions for portraits. It was apparent that we must remain in Brussels for some time, so we took an apartment

in the old-fashioned Place du Chatelain. We were all happy; my husband because he was making music with Ysaye, I because of my portraits, and my small son because he had acquired some bosom friends, the workmen who were repairing the street in front of the house and whom he volunteered to help every day, considerably to their amusement.

2

One day a woman attended the exhibition, looked at each of my portraits with great attention, and then asked for the director, whom she requested to introduce me. It was the Countess Caraman-Chimay, lady in waiting to the Queen.

The following day she returned, bringing with her the old Duchesse d'Ursel who had been a famous beauty in her day, and had been painted many times. She was now about eighty and she clung to her old way of life, living in a palace in which no electricity had ever been installed, but where hundreds of candles burned whenever she entertained.

A few days later I received a message that the Queen of Belgium and the royal princess would attend the exhibition at eleven o'clock. The Queen asked that my husband, whom she had met many years before, be there so that she could talk to him.

I did not know the etiquette of receiving the Queen and I was terrified of making a faux pas, so I telephoned to Ysaye, asking him to come and help me.

"With great pleasure," he said with his usual kindness. "And don't worry. You will love her."

He arrived promptly, wearing a Prince Albert coat, pumps, and an enormous black flowing tie. My son too was there, but I did not tell him about the Queen as I did not want to treat him as a part of my exhibition or to make him self-conscious.

"Wait at the entrance," Ysaye instructed us, and he went down to the street to await the royal carriage in which the Queen, the princess, and the countess appeared.

The Queen looked at me and smiled, and I knew that I would

love her all my life. She had a narrow face, intensely blue eyes, and a slim and girlish body, with a very long neck. She had great charm and a beautiful smile. She held herself straight in a way that reminded me of the Queen of Naples, who was her aunt. For the Queen of Belgium was also a Wittelsbach, daughter of Carl Theodore and of Marie José Braganza, Infanta of Portugal.

She was dressed in pastel colors, beige, light gray and pale blue, with a gray squirrel coat. She walked with me into the exhibition, while my husband followed with the princess, and the procession was brought to a close by the countess with Ysaye. All at once the Queen stopped. "Look at that beautiful child!" she exclaimed. "I wonder who he is."

"That is our boy," I replied.

She went to him with her light, quick step, and kissed him. "Tell me," she said to Mischa. "What are you going to be when you grow up: a sculptor like your mother or a musician like your father?"

And my son, who was seven, replied, "I began to take music lessons too early, and it gave me a real disgust for music."

The Queen was much amused. She began to look at my sculptures, examining each one intently like a connoisseur. She asked about my sitters.

"I want you to do my daughter," she said spontaneously.

"Madame," I said tentatively, "I would like to do *your* portrait."

She laughed but did not reply. Several days later I received a message that the Queen would send for me at ten in the morning, and that I was to bring whatever I needed in order to do her portrait. I was also to bring my son.

When we went downstairs at ten in the morning, there stood a carriage with big gold crowns on the door, light gray horses and two liveried men in light gray uniforms with top hats. We entered the carriage and drove off, while the astonished workers on the street watched their little helper depart in regal splendor.

The Belgian royal family lived all the year long at their

summer palace in the forest of Laeken, a half-hour's drive out of Brussels. Sentries stood at either side of the gate, which had two entrances, the one on the right for public conveyances, the one on the left for the royal carriages. The soldiers presented arms, much to Mischa's delight; and my small son was beside himself with excitement, bombarding me with questions that I was completely unable to answer.

We drove into the park along a curving road lined on either side by big hundred-year-old trees. At the entrance to the palace the carriage drew up with such a flourish I was afraid I would fall out, but I managed to alight without losing my dignity. Footmen in black evening clothes with knee breeches and white stockings escorted us up a big curving staircase to the second floor, down a long corridor lined with portraits of past kings and queens of Belgium, to a round room that, I knew later, was the one in which the Queen served tea to her intimate friends. On the wall hung a portrait of her younger son, Prince Charles, in the same dress and pose as the famous "Blue Boy."

The footman knocked at a door, and soon the countess came out to greet us cordially and lead us into the Queen's living room. It was a big room with huge windows overlooking the park and the river. It seemed that the forest must extend forever, for the park at Laeken is really immense.

In the center of the room was a little marble fountain in which red, pink, and white gardenias were floating. A little china bird sat perched in the middle. On either side were white marble fireplaces with photos of the royal children on both mantels. And everywhere there were flowers and plants. One whole corner was occupied by a huge couch covered with white fur and with dozens of cushions of every size and color. On the other side of the room was a big concert piano.

We heard quick light steps, and the Queen came in, looking like a young girl. She was wearing a gray-blue satin dress and matching high-heeled shoes, with a single yellow rose on her

dress. The combination with her very blue eyes was altogether charming.

She did not resemble other women. There was something indescribably poetic about her whole appearance.

"You will be terribly bored," she told my son. "Go and run in the park. Ask the footman. He will show you where the bicycles are."

The countess took Mischa downstairs to the entrance of the park, and soon from the windows we saw him running and jumping through the bushes.

As I began my portrait the Queen asked, "Do you mind if I talk?"

"Not at all."

She began to speak of my husband, of studying with Ysaye, of music. Then she said that while she loved music best, she had also done some painting, and she sent the countess to bring some of her drawings. The countess returned with a framed portrait of the Princess Marie José done in pastels.

"Tell me frankly what you think," said the Queen.

I was in a quandary, for I cannot flatter. "It is not bad, madame," I said at length. "It is very nicely designed. The colors are all right. But I would not have put this white high light on the nose and on the chin. The portrait would have been much better without it."

The Queen's smile flashed, and the countess laughed outright.

"The portrait," explained the countess, "was done by her majesty, but the high lights were put on by a professor at the academy." So, after all, I had not disgraced myself by my honesty.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon when the countess glanced at her wrist watch. By that time I was terribly tired and hungry, but I could not leave until I was dismissed.

"Perhaps," the countess suggested, "Madame Barjansky had better go now, your majesty. You have a three o'clock appointment."

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed the Queen. "Will you come again, day after tomorrow?"

So I made a deep curtsy and went away. I found my boy with rosy cheeks from a long walk in the park. An old gardener had been showing him birds' nests. We were taken home in the same magnificence in which we had arrived. And so ended my first long meeting with the Queen.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

A QUEEN IN A PARK

AFTER a half-dozen sittings my wax sculpture of the Queen of Belgium was finished; but in the meantime a sort of friendship had grown up between us. She was easy to talk to because she was understanding, direct, and sincere, and entirely lacking in pose. She began asking me to stay after my work for the day was finished, and then to lunch with her as well.

That too was completely informal. Luncheon was served in her drawing room; a table already set was rolled in on wheels by two footmen; and another table was brought on which silver-covered dishes stood on electric heaters, and coffee was served in a blue thermos bottle. The footmen left, and we ate alone, waiting on each other. Once I remember the Queen smiled her mischievous smile as she offered me a new dish. "Do try some," she urged me. "It is our national dish. I have never liked it, but as I never dared tell the cook, I am always having it."

I liked her not because she was a queen, but because she had the soul of an artist and of an elf, a strange, half human, half divine being from legendary forests. She loved the great park at Laeken; her real life was centered in it. She and the King had a warm friendship with the old gardener, Monsieur Parat, who had been gardener to King Leopold II and had known King Albert as a young boy and the Queen from her first years in Belgium when she came as Princess Albert.

Monsieur Parat was a middle-sized man with a handsome face. He looked like a Greek philosopher, with a black beard and hair and eyes and a charming smile. I often saw him walking

with the King in the park, where he had a little house in which he lived with his family. Every morning before daylight he was up giving orders to the forty gardeners who served under him.

In the river that crossed the park there were hundreds of swans, white ones and black. Often the gardener came to tell the Queen that a new swan had been born or to show her nests where there were swan's eggs.

Once at luncheon the Queen started to tell me something about the greenhouse. "What!" she exclaimed. "You have never seen it? Quick, let's finish lunch and go there." I followed her light quick steps as we hurried to the greenhouse. It was celebrated in Brussels, with its exotic flowers, orchids, and a pergola miles long over whose arch hung fuchsia. It was fantastically beautiful. It was that day she discovered that I loved flowers, and never again did I leave the palace without my arms filled with them, placed in the carriage for me at the Queen's orders.

We began to take long walks in the park, talking, talking, for her interests were universal. One day she said that she would like to paint in the park with me.

"Madame, I should be delighted," I replied, and I began to tell her some of my ideas about painting.

"Wait a minute," she exclaimed, and she ran out of the room and came back with some water colors. "Now show me what you mean."

As we were bending over her work the door opened, and an unusually tall man with a beautiful head, even features, blue eyes, and blond hair appeared,

"Am I disturbing you?"

"Oh, no," she said. "Come in."

That was Albert, the King of Belgium. He spoke slowly, in a low voice, with a pronounced Germanic accent. He squinted nearsightedly through a pince-nez. With almost as much simplicity as his wife, he talked to me for a moment about my husband whom he knew, and about my son. Then he urged the Queen to go to some audience. Compared with her husband

she was tiny; and she later told me that she called him Pharaoh because the Pharaohs are shown on their tombs as very big with little wives who barely reach to their knees.

As we walked through the park, the Queen moving swiftly and lightly, as though she would leave no imprint of her steps behind her, she told me about her youth in the Bavarian Alps. She had adored her father, Carl Theodore, nephew of King Ludwig, Wagner's patron. He was a distinguished oculist, and he occasionally allowed her to help him. Once, she said, he came to dinner direct from an operation that he had performed, describing it to her in such detail that she fainted and fell with her face in the hot soup.

The Queen of Belgium did not live in accordance with the usual ideas of court life. She rose early and after a light breakfast began to practice her violin, either alone or with her teacher. If it were necessary, she went to the palace in Brussels for an audience or to receive a delegation, and she visited a number of charities and exhibitions. Every day she took a lesson in Flemish, which is not an easy language, as she was obliged to reply in that tongue when she opened bazaars in the Flemish part of Belgium. In the afternoons she often made music with other musicians or had someone play for her. In the evenings, if their presence was not required for a gala opening of some sort, the King and Queen remained alone at Laeken, taking long walks in the park or sitting before the fireplace while she read aloud to him. They were a devoted couple.

Once, when I knew her better, I asked, "Where did you meet the King for the first time?"

"Oh, that was in Paris in the house of my aunt, the Queen of Naples."

"And was it at once the *coup de foudre*?"

Her eyes sparkled. "I thought he was wonderful," she said simply.

Theirs was a love match and they were happy. Together they visited all the corners of the earth, to see people, to learn about things. Like her, the King was insatiably curious and unwilling

to be hedged around with court etiquette. They were wonderful companions and devoted parents to their three children: the handsome Prince Leopold, the strange and gloomy Prince Charles, and Princess Marie José, who was extremely tall, with a thick bunch of curly blond hair and blue eyes. She looked more like her father than her mother and rarely smiled, which was a pity, because when she did she had dimples and she looked extremely charming.

More and more often I visited the Queen during that three-month visit in Brussels, and always after that, whenever I returned to Belgium, I spent most of my time with her in the park. She loved my husband's music, and we spent beautiful afternoons while Alexandre, Ysaye, and a pianist played trios. We would have tea afterwards in the little round room where the portrait of Prince Charles, dressed as the "Blue Boy," hung. The Queen and her daughter served tea and sandwiches and chocolate cake. And once the Queen was serving Ysaye, a plate of sandwiches in one hand, and one of cake in the other. Remembering his diabetes, she switched hands quickly so that the cake was beyond his reach.

Ysaye turned to my little son and said in disgust: "What! I go to my king and eat nothing but bread and butter. I prefer chocolate cake." A few moments later, the violinist asked for a glass of water. "What," demanded Mischa, "do you go to your king to drink plain water?"

On a very gray day the Queen sent for me. She was waiting impatiently when I arrived and said: "Don't take off your coat. Come out to the park. I must show you something."

We hurried downstairs and out into the park, walking until we reached a part I did not know at all.

"Now," she said in excitement, "close your eyes and give me your hand. I will lead you. Don't open your eyes until I tell you." We walked for a few moments, and then she said triumphantly, "Now!"

We stood in a little field completely blue with forget-me-nots, with a few trees laden with yellow blossoms. The sky was

a deep heavy gray, and the whole composition gave the effect of an impressionistic picture.

The Queen was radiant. "Isn't it beautiful!" she exclaimed. "Early this morning Monsieur Parat came to tell me that the forget-me-nots were in bloom, and I sent for you because I knew you would enjoy them."

Court circles are rarely noted for their brilliance, but the Queen preferred to surround herself not with the usual court groups but with creative people—musicians, artists, writers, scientists. She was not content merely to receive them. She wanted to know them, to grasp their ideas, and as a result, she had a number of close friendships among such people.

And sometimes, during those long hours, I asked her about the First World War in which she proved herself to be a splendid nurse.

"Looking back now," she said, "I don't know how I was able to do it. When I first visited the hospitals and saw the wounded, I would cry. Finally the doctor told me I could not behave like that. Unless I pulled myself together, I would do more harm than good. It is amazing what you can endure, how much suffering and sorrow and blood and wounds and dead bodies one can see. /

"Once I remember visiting a battlefield after a battle. The sun had just gone down. The earth was black and damp, and there was a little pool of water red with blood. Lying beside it was a handsome boy, so blond, his helmet beside him. The doctors and I buried him, and I sent his medal to his mother. Oh, it was terrible. I could not do it again!"

But the next day a telephone call came from the palace, asking me not to come. There had been a great disaster in the mines, and the Queen had gone, smiling and compassionate, to console the distraught wives of the miners. Once more she was making the effort that she had said was impossible.

She told me how, during the First World War, her habit of taking pictures got her into trouble. She had a keen sense of humor, and the story delighted her. She and the King and his

aide-de-camp were on the coast in a section occupied by the English. The Queen had just snapped a picture of a half-submerged boat when an alert English soldier promptly put all three of them under arrest. Neither the King nor the Queen revealed their identity, but the aide-de-camp declared haughtily, "I am aide-de-camp to his majesty the King of Belgium."

The English soldier looked at him in ill concealed contempt. "I know only one king," he replied. "His name is George."

2

Later, when we were once more in Brussels, my husband and I were invited to dinner at the palace. We were received in the Queen's living room, and then, together with the King and Queen, we went downstairs to the dining room where the lady in waiting and the King's aide-de-camp awaited us.

As we came in, the aide-de-camp said, "Madame Barjansky, you will be seated on the King's right."

I was frightened because I did not know what on earth to say to him, but I found the King as easy to talk to as the Queen.

"You are Russian, aren't you?" he asked me.

"Yes, sire."

"I wonder whether you ever read Prince Kropotkin's book, *My Life*."

"Yes, your majesty, I read it and loved it."

"What luck!" he said enthusiastically. "I have never had an opportunity to talk to anyone who had read it."

So we began to talk about Kropotkin, about Russia, about the revolution, and I was astonished to learn how much the King knew about my country and to discover how freely he criticized the old regime. The conversation was very animated, and through the great mass of flowers in the center of the table I saw the Queen smiling, because we had found something we enjoyed discussing.

After dinner I told her that I should like to do King Albert's portrait and asked whether she thought it would be possible.

"I will ask him," she promised.

The next morning I received a message that the King would expect me at ten o'clock in the palace at Brussels. When I arrived, his aide-de-camp, before opening the door to the King's study, said, "Madame Barjansky, you must not remain more than twenty-five minutes, as the King has a number of audiences this morning."

"Shall I go away?"

"No, his majesty will tell you when to leave."

The study was a very small room furnished in Empire mahogany with gold and bronze mountings. In the corners were marble busts of King Leopold II and his wife, both of which, I was amused to see, had dirty noses because the servants were afraid to wash them.

While I began to model him, the King again talked eagerly about Russia and Russian writers, and I told him everything I could.

"I have read too much in my life," he told me. "If I were to live again, I would probably read fewer books and only those of real importance. But I have always loved to read."

Behind the King was a great Empire clock that showed I had been there far more than twenty-five minutes, but he talked on and on. Two hours later he got up and said timidly, "I think, Madame Barjansky, you must be a little tired"—which was his usual manner of sending people away. When I came out in the corridor there was a crowd waiting, while furious aides-de-camp rushed about, their arms filled with papers.

On another occasion, after dinner at the palace, the King was discussing politics with my husband.

"How strange, your majesty," Alexandre said thoughtfully, "that every war but the last one produced a genius!"

The King looked at him for a moment and then replied: "You forget Lenin, Monsieur Barjansky. There was a genius."

I am not sure whether it was then or later that the King told me, "I am a socialist but my wife is democratic."

That night the Queen spoke of one of the foreign minis-

ters. When I said I did not know which one she meant, she described him, analyzing the structure of his face.

"But that is the description of a sculptor, your majesty."

She smiled.

"Have you ever modeled?"

"No, but I should like to."

"Will you work with me tomorrow?"

The next morning her lady in waiting telephoned, asking what equipment was necessary, as the Queen wanted to have a sculpture lesson that afternoon. When I arrived at three o'clock the Queen was excited. She asked whether the armature and the modeling stand and the clay were right and then demanded eagerly, "What shall I model?"

"Why not do your maid, Marguerite?" I suggested. "She has a very sculptural face."

At seven o'clock that night the Queen was still modeling, and poor Marguerite was half dead from maintaining the pose.

The Queen loved sculpture, and she had the satisfaction, rare for royalty, of knowing that she had accomplished it all herself. I never touched her clay. After her first lesson she was still so excited that I stayed on, and for two hours we walked in the park while she bombarded me with questions about sculpture. I remember, because it was a typical gesture of this elfin queen, that on the way back she caught a firefly and held it to her watch to tell the time.

Whenever the weather was clear we painted in the park. The Queen had a little rolling box that held the palate, colors, two stools, canvases, and easels, that we pushed until we found something we wanted to paint. She had a very complicated easel, which, she told me, was invented by Winston Churchill, with whom she had painted during the First World War. Once, I remember, we decided to paint a little antique temple with columns and a Greek god, which stood in the park.

"I shall never be able to do the statue," she said.

"Forget you are doing a statue, madame. Do a long line

and a round line. Think only of the lines, the pure beautiful lines."

Suddenly the Queen laughed triumphantly. By concentrating entirely on the lines, she discovered she had done the statue.

3

It was during that first stay in Brussels that the Queen said to me one day, "I have a surprise for you. Tomorrow you are to start modeling my son and his wife. You know my daughter-in-law is Swedish, very tall and beautiful. And my son is so handsome."

She laughed at her own maternal pride and then added: "They will expect you at eleven tomorrow in the palace in Brussels. They are very timid, so you must not wait for them to talk to you, just talk to them. They are terribly in love. We have given them an apartment in the right wing of the palace, where they are entirely alone except for one servant, Leopold's valet, who has been with them since he was a child. I didn't want to impose a lady in waiting on Astrid when she was just married."

The next morning a footman took me into a big corner room in the palace in Brussels, where Leopold and Astrid were waiting. He was an extraordinarily handsome man, and she was very young, very thin, kind and charming. They had been married only three months, and she was already extremely popular in Belgium.

Later they told me that after the wedding in Sweden Leopold returned to Brussels alone to prepare for a second wedding ceremony in Belgium. He and the royal family went to Antwerp to greet his bride. She arrived on a white steamer. She was dressed entirely in white, her suit, her furs, everything. A crowd of thousands of people were waiting to welcome her. Leopold, nearly running, went to meet her, and Astrid threw her arms around him and kissed him, a manifestation that the

crowd had not expected but heartily approved. Leopold gave her a bouquet of white flowers, and she held one in her hand, waving.

Her features were not really beautiful, her nose was a little too long, her chin too short and prominent, but she had a beautiful body, almost as tall as Leopold, and a wonderful pink-and-white complexion.

She talked to us in English because she did not yet know enough French. She was obviously madly in love with her husband. The first few times I saw them, they were shy, but after that they always sat in the same chair, kissing each other all the time, except when Astrid, who was in the first stages of her pregnancy, would ring a bell, ask for a lemon, and eat it.

Once I asked her how she had met Prince Leopold.

"He came to see us with his mother," she said. "You know we lived in the country in a big house." She went on to talk about her father whom she loved deeply, her mother, her two sisters, her brothers. She was an artless girl of completely simple tastes. Her eyes shone as she spoke of Leopold.

"He came with his mother, and I did not know who he was. They told me he was Mr. Alexander. And then in a few days we fell in love, and now I am so happy."

Later she told me how much the Queen had helped her in her adjustment to a strange country and duties that were completely foreign to her. "She has never seemed like a mother-in-law," she said. "She has been a sister."

When the time came for her son to marry, the Queen of Belgium had gone from country to country with him, where he met the royal princesses. None of them made any impression on him. Astrid was not the daughter of the King of Sweden, she was his niece, and because she had few official duties she had led a quiet family life in the country. She and her sisters had walked alone through the streets of Stockholm, shopping, going to movies, like private individuals.

Belgium, however, did not approve of this informality. There were rules of etiquette that must not be broken, and that the

simple Swedish country girl could not learn. Once while I was modeling her, I dropped one of my tools. Before I could reach it Princess Astrid had bent over to pick it up, and we bumped our heads together.

After the birth of her first child, Astrid, like any proud mother, wanted to show off her baby, and with her Swedish simplicity she walked through the streets of Brussels, pushing the baby carriage. The aristocracy was not amused. Complaints were made to King Albert who, informal and natural himself, sympathized with the daughter-in-law for whom he felt great affection. He gave Leopold and Astrid another palace out of town in Laeken where they were surrounded by trees and lawns, and not by houses filled with curious and observant eyes.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

PORTRAIT OF A KING

THE Queen of Belgium had been doing less and less modeling, and one day I asked whether she had lost interest in it.

"No," she replied, "but I love the park so much I cannot bear to be away from it for long."

"But why don't you work in the park?" I suggested. A couple of weeks later a bungalow was erected in the park, and we began to model there together.

I was working in the bungalow one day with the Queen when I received a telephone call from my husband, who was spending a week at Namur as the guest of the Baron Carton de Wiart, whose wife was one of the Queen's ladies in waiting. She was a violinist and extremely musical.

"You ought to come here," my husband told me. "It is divine. Why don't you ask the Queen to come with you?"

I laughed, and the Queen asked, "What is the joke?"

"Alexandre wants your majesty and me to come to Namur."

She smiled and with her light quick steps crossed the room and disappeared in the park. A few minutes later she returned, radiant, and declared, "Tomorrow morning I shall take Madame Barjansky and my violin and go to spend a day in Namur."

When I reached the palace at Laeken the next morning, there was another surprise. The King had decided to accompany us, and he was waiting in front of the palace with his blue Ford. It seems the Queen had telephoned to the baroness:

"I am going to bring Madame Barjansky and my chauffeur, and I should like to have my chauffeur join us for lunch."

"Of course, your majesty," the surprised baroness had replied.

"And I want your husband to show my chauffeur the cliffs on the Meuse River." The baroness laughed as she realized who the chauffeur was.

The King wore civilian clothes and one of the large hats made for him in Egypt. He drove extremely fast, faster than I have ever ridden before or since. As we crossed the bridge at the entrance to Namur a detachment of soldiers was going over. They glanced at the car without recognizing the King. The Queen laughed. "Your army ignores you, my dear," she said mischievously.

The Baron Carton de Wiart owned a beautiful old castle on the bank of the Meuse, and we were very gay at luncheon. The only solemn face was that of the butler who served us.

After lunch, the King, the baron, his daughter, and a cousin of hers took a boat across the Meuse to climb the sheer chalk cliffs that bear the curious name of *Marche les Dames*. The Queen, the baroness, my husband, and a viola player went indoors to play quartets. It was a beautiful autumn day, and I sat down on the bank of the river with a pair of binoculars, watching the climbers on the other bank of the river. Even with those strong glasses, they were only small black silhouettes that appeared and disappeared. And I was afraid, so afraid that it amazed me to think the Queen could be playing serenely, without anxiety. Whenever any of the climbers disappeared from view my heart stopped beating.

It was all imagination, I thought. Of course there was no danger. There could not possibly be any danger. But there was danger, for six months later the King lost his life in those tragic mountains.

That afternoon we were all waiting as the mountain climbers rowed back across the river. For fun we waved a Belgian flag and sang the *Brabançonne*, the Belgian anthem. The baron and the girls were exhausted, tired, dirty, their clothes torn. The King was as fresh as though he were just starting. He

did not even need to change his collar. Indeed, he seemed more rested than when he had started out, for mountain climbing was his favorite form of relaxation.

"Imagine!" the baron said, "He climbs a mountain the way I would walk down the street. He handled the ropes; he pulled us up; he is really amazing."

The giant King, pleased and smiling timidly, decided that it was much too beautiful a day to go back to Brussels.

"We'll remain here at the castle for dinner," he decided.

At once the whole place began to stir with uneasy movement, because the King and Queen had been expected only for lunch.

It was midnight when we reached Brussels, again traveling at the same dizzy pace, and they drove me home before going back to Laeken.

2

In January, 1933, my husband was to give a series of concerts in Egypt, and I accompanied him because I had been commissioned by Monsieur Capart, director of the Egyptian department of the Belgian Museum, to copy the wooden sculpture of Sheike El Baled. The Brussels Museum did not have a good cast, and the sculpture was in such condition that it was dangerous to cast it. It was a curious figure, natural and alive, with alabaster eyes, the center of which was a point of bronze.

Going to Egypt was a strange experience. In one week of travel we went through all the seasons of the year. We left Brussels in a heavy autumn rain. It always seems to rain in Brussels. The following day I was walking in the snow of Switzerland. Twenty-four hours later I was in Rome in early spring, and in three days reached Egypt and full summer.

To stay in Egypt even for a short time is to inhabit the past. You stretch out your hand and touch yesterday and all the yesterdays before it.

The museum in which I was working was overcrowded with strange and wonderful art objects. Every room was so crammed

with things taken from excavations that they could have filled three or four large museum halls. Much of this overcrowding was due to the fact that a great deal of the material taken from the tomb of King Tutankhamen had been placed in the museum.

I was overwhelmed by the Tutankhamen collection, at the entrance to which had been placed two huge black figures of King Tutankhamen himself, standing as they had stood in his tomb, like guards. Looking at the art that had surrounded him in his daily life, I was greatly impressed by its beauty. Nothing was awkward or heavy, everything light and charming. The portraits of his young queen were delightful. There was jewelry so delicate that Cartier and Tiffany cannot copy it. Everything showed a highly developed decorative sense and a wonderful feeling for color. All the furniture had light lines. If it were not a contradiction in terms I might say that if one could forget that everything was of gold and precious stones, one would have a feeling of English sobriety. The whole collection revealed the story of a young king deeply in love with his adolescent queen.

As it happened, we were staying at the same hotel as Jean Capart, director of the Belgian Museum. One morning when my husband and I were breakfasting with Monsieur and Madame Capart, the director was called to the telephone. He went out into the lobby where we heard him utter a loud exclamation. We ran out to him.

"How terrible!" he exclaimed. "Our King is dead."

We went at once to the embassy, crowded with Belgians in tears. There was no one who did not have great esteem and admiration for this man, so good and noble, so just and intelligent. For me, it was the first genuine grief of my life. I had known him well, had talked with him for many hours. He was a rare human being, completely unselfish, a scholar and a philosopher, simple and shy and good.

And I remembered how he had told me once: "If I were free

to do what I like, I would go to the mountains and remain there. I would rather do that than anything in the world."

Ceremonies, receptions, official affairs were torture to him. His greatest happiness had been the evenings that he spent alone with the woman whom he referred to not as "the Queen" but as "my wife." They loved to spend their evenings together, dining in the park, sitting on a bench at a rustic garden table, eating cold food from a tray, or in front of the fireplace while she read aloud to him.

King Albert had the highest admiration for the cleverness, culture, and intelligence of his Queen, but he was very humble about himself. He had a high regard for people who acquired things by their own merits rather than by heritage.

He bitterly despised both Hitler and Mussolini. On one occasion he told me, "I am constantly amazed by the King of Italy. If such a thing were to happen here in Belgium I would pack my baggage and get out, but I would not permit another man to rule the country in my place." He made this statement quite openly though his daughter at that time was married to the son of the King of Italy.

Another time, speaking of dictators, he said to me, "I think I have prepared my son to be a king far better than any man could be prepared to be a dictator."

The last time I saw him he asked me a number of questions about the Talmud, none of which I could answer as I knew nothing about it. He and the Queen were both reading it at the time. They liked to read the same books, buying two copies, and discussing them as they went along. Indeed, there was a copy of the Talmud on his night table at the time he died. Both he and the Queen were extremely interested in Palestine, which they had recently visited, and about which King Albert said, "The Bible is the Baedeker of Palestine."

Once when we were dining at the palace, an important foreign lady was placed at the King's right while I sat at his left. All through dinner the woman talked indefatigably about

hunting, how she had killed this animal and that. To my surprise the King bent over me and murmured: "That's not a woman. It's a vampire."

He loved simple people and Monsieur Parat, his gardener, whose bust the Queen later sculptured, was a great friend of his. Together they walked in the park for hours. The King knew all the trees, and whenever there was a big storm he went out early in the morning to find out which ones had fallen.

But his greatest pleasure was mountain climbing. Whenever he could take a vacation, he would go to Switzerland where he could climb to his heart's content.

On one of these incognito excursions, when he was using the name of Monsieur Dupont, he was climbing with a guide who knew him well but pretended not to have penetrated his incognito. The King paused for breath.

"What," he inquired, "is the name of that mountain?"

It was Peak Albert, and the guide smiled. "That, monsieur," he replied, "is Peak Dupont."

There were no mountains in Belgium, only the chalky cliffs at Namur, where the King met his fatal accident. I learned the story not only from the Queen herself but from the Baron Carton de Wiart, whom I met in Rome on my way back from Egypt.

There had been a ministerial crisis in February, and the King was unable to take time for a vacation and go to St. Moritz as he did each year. One afternoon he went to the Queen, who was in her room, suffering from lumbago.

"I think I will take the car and go to Namur," he told her. "It is only two o'clock, and I can be back by five. That will give me time to climb for an hour."

So far as I know, King Albert had never before gone climbing alone. He had always been accompanied either by his son Leopold or by his aide-de-camp. But Leopold was in Switzerland with his wife, and the aide-de-camp was with his wife who was having a child. So the King took his old valet, van Dyck.

Van Dyck could not drive the car, but the King took his

blue Ford and drove to Marche les Dames, where the chalky cliffs were.

"I will return in forty-five minutes," he told van Dyck, and promptly forty-five minutes later he returned to the car.

"I think I will remain another twenty minutes," he said. "I will climb one more cliff."

Twenty minutes passed, twenty-five, more. It was nearly four o'clock, and van Dyck began to worry. He got out of the car and shouted, "Your majesty, where are you?" Only the silence answered.

It was a winter afternoon, and in Belgium the winter days are very short. It grew dark. Because he could not drive the car, van Dyck ran to the village where he telephoned the palace that he could not find the King. At once an expedition was organized, made up of skilled mountain climbers, among them the Baron Carton de Wiart who knew the cliffs well.

They began to search the mountains. It grew darker and darker. Torches were brought from the village, and the searchers, growing desperate, shouted again and again.

It was late now, eleven o'clock, and there was a full moon. Carton de Wiart suddenly stumbled over a long rope. He saw that it had broken off and was hanging over the precipice. With difficulty he scrambled down the face of the cliff. And there—and when he told me he could not help crying—he found the King. His death was a thing of great beauty. He was alone in the mountain like an eagle, his arms open in the moonlight. And as the baron spoke I heard again the King's voice telling me, "If I were free I would go to the mountains and remain there."

His skull was crushed, he had been dead for several hours, and he had lost all his blood. Because he was stiff, they had great difficulty in getting him into the car.

Back in the palace at Laeken they moved silently, for no one had the courage to tell his Queen. They took him to his bedroom, but they could not stretch him out on his bed until—it is a macabre detail—four men had sat on him. He was as

white as marble; but he was embalmed, his face given a normal color; and then one of the courtiers and the doctor went to the Queen's apartment.

When she saw them, she knew at once. All night she spent in vigil at the dead King's bedside.

Her grief was so deep that when I came back from Egypt I hardly recognized her. Her greatest attraction was her characteristically happy smile, and she smiled no more. Her husband had taken her smile with him. Her face was like stone, much thinner, much longer. There were none of the curved lines that a smile makes; only straight, hard, severe lines.

3

It is a curious thing that in Egypt, the land of death, I took part in the mass for the King.

"What am I to do?" the Belgian minister said. "I must have music for the church ceremony."

"I will provide that," my husband offered.

"In the church there is to be an empty coffin. It should bear a royal crown, and how is that to be done?"

"I will do that," I said. "Give me a drawing of the Belgian crown."

Oddly enough, the only one to be found in Egypt was on a printed menu for a dinner the King had attended. I took the menu and went down to the basement of the museum, where a molder had his atelier. Here I made the royal crown of wire, modeling directly in plaster because there was no time to cast the crown. I gilded it, and put inside a piece of red velvet and modeled two scepters of plaster. The crown was then placed on the coffin and two velvet cushions at its foot, while my husband, behind the altar, played and conducted a little orchestra in Bach and Gluck and played the Brabançonne with muted strings, while his moving and wonderful sonority was so filled with his grief that those who were praying in the church were touched to tears. It is a strange thing that we two foreigners

should both have contributed, far away in Egypt, to the ceremony for the King we esteemed and loved so much.

4

Two years after the death of King Albert, the young King Leopold and Queen Astrid, whom Belgians called the ice princess because of her fair beauty, went to Switzerland on a vacation. Like King Albert they loved the mountains, and like him they met tragedy there.

The King was wearing big boots with large nails in them for mountain climbing. They were alone in their little car. The road was good and, also like his father, the King drove extremely fast. There was a stone parapet on either side of the highway except for one very small space. Just before they reached this unguarded section, the Queen opened the map and asked the King a question. He glanced down at the map, his foot in its heavy nailed boot slipped on the accelerator, and he lost control of the car. It skidded off the road and into the valley in which there was only one tree. The Queen was hurled out of the car against the tree, and her skull was crushed, just as King Albert's had been. She died instantly in her husband's arms.

They brought her back to Brussels, sewed up the scalp, and dressed her in white with tulle to cover her mutilated body. She lay in the Brussels palace, covered with roses, while the whole population came to pay their last tribute to their queen. And at nine o'clock that night the big doors of the palace were closed, and the royal family and her unhappy husband could be with her.

She was incredibly beautiful in white satin with her pale young face. Hers had been an exceptionally happy life; happy in her youth in her own country and with her family; and profoundly happy with her handsome young prince. She was beloved in both countries, she had three beautiful children, and not one moment of her life had been grim or unhappy.

The young King refused to ride in the funeral procession but

walked all the way behind his wife's carriage, his face set. Later he could not return to the palace where he had been so happy with her, so he and his children moved to the palace at Laeken, where his widowed mother was living.

For three years Queen Elizabeth, always so quick and active, had lived in a state of mental and physical paralysis. She could not fulfill her duties; in time she could not walk.

One day, in a desperate effort to arouse her, I asked, "Why don't you take up your sculpture again?" Music, I knew, was out of the question; it only lacerates unhappy nerves. But sculpture is a silent art, and the wet clay is like a compress on sick nerves.

"I will try it for fifteen minutes, just to please you," she said.

"Why don't you do your brother?" I suggested.

She agreed, and her brother came. To our surprise and delight she worked for hours that day, and began again the next. That was the beginning of her recovery; slowly she went from one activity to another.

She also modeled a bust of her gardener, Monsieur Parat. It was an excellent piece of work and was exhibited several times. She had it cast in bronze and planned to please Parat by putting it in the greenhouse that he loved as though it were his child. She promised him that it would be put there with great ceremony and a day was set in June, 1940. In May, however, Belgium was invaded, and the Queen mother left the palace of Laeken to work in a hospital at Ostend. Later, when she returned from the hospital and King Leopold came back as a prisoner of the Germans, they learned that Monsieur Parat had died.

After the tragedy of Queen Astrid's death, Queen Elizabeth once more took up the duties of her position, lavishing her affection on her grandchildren.

I was there when she was modeling the little Prince, Albert—a sculpture for which she later received a prize at the autumn salon in Paris.

"You know," he told me, "when I grow up, I am going to be very rich."

The use children make of words has always fascinated me, and I asked him, "What do you mean—you are going to be rich?"

"Oh," he said, "I am going to love lots of people."

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

SOME CONTEMPORARY SCULPTORS

OSCAR WILDE once said that every piece of art is a critique of the artist, that is, in giving his own impression of what he sees, the artist reveals the quality of his own mind and personality. He might have added, with equal truth, that to some extent every artist's work is a portrait of himself. Small people, as a rule, do small sculpture with infinite detail. Large people do massive work with less attention to detail. The master of the Italian Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci, has some resemblance to his own face in almost everything he painted; he reproduced his own likeness even in the famous Mona Lisa.

Among the sculptors whom I have known, one of the most interesting was Medardo Rosso, a contemporary of the French sculptor, Auguste Rodin, who did very impressive work, modeling in wax.

Rosso was a stout individual, eccentric and unpredictable. We first met him in Milan where my husband gave a concert. Afterward Rosso came around to express his admiration for the music, and my husband asked him to spend the following afternoon with us. The next day the sculptor started out to keep his appointment, but he had forgotten entirely our name. Consequently, he went from one hotel to another asking, "Do you have a charming couple here? The husband is a cellist with long hair, and the wife is a sculptress." In the forty-fifth hotel he found us.

Medardo Rosso was a Venetian by birth, who had introduced a number of new ideas and great modernism into sculpture. His work might be called impressionistic. Like so many artists,

who appear to delight in carrying on feuds with one another, his greatest hobby was a lifelong battle against Rodin. He used to go to exhibits of Rodin's work and make loud speeches against it, constantly trying to persuade people that Rodin had stolen everything from him.

His sculptures were exceptionally sensitive. I remember a head of a little boy that he called, "A sick child." It was plastically well done and had about it a poignant expression of suffering, made more effective by the fact that it was cast in yellow wax. It is now in the Museum of Modern Art in Rome.

He also did a portrait bust of his Paris concierge, an old woman in whose face one could read the record of a long lifetime of hard work and great suffering. The head was exhibited a number of times under the name, "La Concierge." But once an exhibition of religious art was held in Venice, and Rosso, eager to display his sculpture again, rebaptized his concierge and entered her once more, this time with the name "St. Ursula."

2

One day I was with an American woman at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées to see Josephine Baker, in the Negro revue. It was having a huge success because it was so dynamic, so robust, healthy, with something earthy about it, completely new and refreshing in the perverse and overrefined air of Paris.

At that time I was considering a Paris exhibition, and I wanted to have my work introduced by some important French sculptor. The two great men in sculpture in Paris at the time were Maillol and Bourdelle. The Théâtre des Champs Elysées was decorated with some very interesting frescoes or bas-reliefs, I forget which, and I asked my American friend who had done them.

"They are the work of a friend of mine, Antoine Bourdelle," she replied.

"I have been looking for somebody to introduce me to Bourdelle," I told her, and she telephoned at once. With her I

went to the plain, bourgeois apartment where Bourdelle lived with his wife, a charming and hospitable Greek from Asia Minor. She was much younger than her husband, and she had been one of his pupils. "Imagine," he told me in delight, "my name is Antony, and hers is Cleopatra."

Bourdelle was, for all his bourgeois setting, very theatrical. He was a little man with a big head, a large forehead and a bald, interestingly formed cranium. He had sharp black eyes so deeply set that he seemed to look at you from inside his head.

One after another I showed him the sculptures I had brought with me, and he was greatly excited. When I brought out the portrait bust of my husband, he looked at it for a long time. "I hear music," he said. "From this hand alone I should know you are a great sculptor."

I was terribly pleased. Other visitors appeared, and he showed them my sculptures, which was most generous of him.

"Prove that you like my sculptures," I said.

"How? Anything you like."

"Will you pose for me?"

"Of course," he said. "Come to my studio tomorrow, on the rue du Maine. I will show you my sculptures, and I can work while you do my portrait."

So I went to him, and while we both worked, he told me all about his ideas of life and art, and his violent disapproval of Rodin whose pupil he had been.

Bourdelle was immensely sure of himself; there was no doubt in his mind that he was one of the greatest men on earth. At this time he was doing little sculpture, and when he was commissioned to do a large work, his pupils performed the major part under his direction.

One day he said: "Do you know why Anatole France became so famous? It was because of a portrait I did of him."

That was too much. Later in the evening, I reported it to Colette who replied, "Bourdelle was born drunk."

He had one quality that was of great comfort to the man, if it was a drawback to the artist. He was satisfied with his

own work. The artist who is not critical is a happy man. Bourdelle wore his ribbon of commander of the Legion of Honor even on his smocks. He regarded himself, rather theatrically, as a great bohemian. Actually he was utterly French, and his life was the typical life of a French bourgeois.

3

For a time in Paris I lived at a little hotel on the Boulevard Saint-Michel. Staying at the same hotel were two fair-haired ladies, mother and daughter, who were friendly and often talked to me when we found ourselves in the same elevator. They were Swedish, they said.

One day they asked whether they could see my work. They were much interested in it.

"You must give an exhibition in Sweden," they told me.

"I should like to," I replied, "but I know no one in your country."

"Our greatest sculptor is Carl Milles," they replied. "He will arrange it. He is a wonderful man."

They asked for some photographs and some of the criticisms I had received and sent them off to their compatriot. I made no objection though I thought nothing would come of it.

On a sunny morning I received a letter with a London postmark. The writer declared that he was much interested in my sculptures, that he would soon be in Paris and would wire me of the time of his arrival. The letter was signed, "Carl Milles."

I began to ask the artists I knew about him, and they told me that Milles was indeed the most important sculptor in Sweden; he had a great position there; he had created a special style; and most of the Swedish public monuments were his work.

Then a telegram arrived, announcing a visit from Carl Milles at ten o'clock the following morning. Like most artists, I think of things in terms of pictures. When I thought of Milles, I created a mental image of a big stout man with a large beard. The next morning I peered eagerly out of my window, trying

to catch a glimpse of Carl Milles before he entered the hotel. I saw a stout old man with a beard about to come in, and a few moments later someone knocked on the door.

I flung it open and then stopped short in surprise. There stood a blond young man with blue eyes, rosy cheeks, and light hair. He looked not unlike Oscar Wilde, without his excessive weight.

"What do you want?" I asked.

"I am Carl Milles," he said in surprise. "Aren't you expecting me?"

"What!" I cried. "Not the man with the beard?" And I explained the picture I had had of him.

Milles laughed. "My juvenile appearance is always misleading people," he said. "Once I received a very ceremonious letter from a Danish scientist who asked for a few moments of my precious time. It was a most impressive document. The man came, and I let him in, wearing the white smock in which I work. He began to look around, and I showed him everything in my studio. Then he patted me on the shoulder and said, 'Now, young man, I have been here more than half an hour. Perhaps you will ask Professor Milles to receive me.'"

I showed him my sculptures, though I have always been reluctant to show them to other sculptors. Every work of art is a segment of life seen through the eyes of an individual. There are as many different views of life as there are artists. Each one sees with different eyes and has different taste, and it is difficult for him to like the work of another, unless it is so totally unlike his own that he can find it interesting without being disturbed by it. That had been the trouble with Bourdelle and Rodin. They worked in the same basic style; the only difference was the difference in their own characters. But my tiny sculptures were utterly unlike the massive sculptures of Carl Milles that I later saw in Sweden.

Milles had a generous nature, and he was hospitable to every new manifestation of art. He looked at the portrait busts one by one and then said: "I am taking the next boat to London.

The train leaves at once. Please give me some paper. I must write."

I gave him some stationery, and he sat down, set my sculptures on the desk, and wrote and wrote and wrote. At length he finished and said, "I have written a preface for the catalogue of your exhibition in Stockholm, and a letter to the best art gallery there."

At that time I did not grasp fully the importance of what he had done for me. He was the dominating figure in the art world of Sweden, and he had taken the responsibility of introducing a total stranger with a new kind of art to his country.

It was nearly twelve-thirty, and he was about to leave when the door opened and my husband came in with our little son. At once Milles began to tell my son about a big dog that had been given to him by the King of Denmark. The conversation turned to other things, and he and my husband were soon absorbed. We asked him to lunch, and we went on talking.

At seven o'clock in the evening we asked him to dine with us and finally at midnight he left. We parted great friends, and he promised to attend the opening of my exhibition. He wanted to show us his house in Stockholm, he said.

In April, 1927, I left Belgium for Sweden, taking with me my portraits of the Queen of Belgium, of Prince Leopold, and of the Princess Astrid. The latter presented my son with a huge box of long thin chocolates, that we call *langues de chat*, and he ate so many that as a result he was sick the whole way.

It was winter in Stockholm, and I had to buy snow boots before I could go from the station to our hotel. Milles had not appeared at the station. A kindly man at the gallery explained in very bad German where and how my sculptures were to be placed. I did not know a word of Swedish, and the opening of the exhibit seemed to me a dismal affair. Milles did not appear. He and his wife, I discovered later, were both ill. I could not tell whether the strangers who looked at my work liked it or not.

Then a big box of spring flowers came to the exhibition with

a card from Carl Milles, welcoming me to Sweden. Some portrait orders began to come in, and I felt much happier.

At last Carl Milles appeared. Somehow he looked different in his own country. Because he was at home here his manner had a curiously dominating quality that it lacked in Paris. He wore a fur cap that was most becoming to him and that made him look like the men of my own country.

He embraced us with his warm cordiality and said, "Now you are my guests." He spent the whole day with us, introducing us to many of his friends, and that evening he took us to his home. It was a wonderful place, the only house I have ever seen that was absolutely impenetrable. There was a huge gate without a bell. No one could hear if you knocked, because there was a garden between the gate and the house. The only way to be admitted was to write or telephone, announcing your visit.

The garden was lovely, with a magnificent view of the sea, and contained pergolas, fountains, and some dancing nymphs that he had sculptured. His great ambition, Milles said, was to build a marble staircase from his garden down to the sea, but as the distance was about the height of a forty-story building nothing had been done about it.

Everything in Milles's house was on the heroic scale. The rooms were high-ceilinged and appeared rather bare. There was an enormous entrance hall, with a pipe organ built into the wall. It contained a huge table and high-backed chairs, and many Gothic wooden sculptures.

His wife, a blonde Viennese painter, sometimes worked with him, Milles carving in wood and his wife painting it. She also did miniatures. She had been the companion of his young years in Paris, and he was devoted to her.

His studio, like the rest of the house, was immense. It had to be because his sculpture was of truly monumental dimensions. He worked a great deal with legendary figures. At that time he dreamed of doing an Orpheus (which he has since completed) to stand in front of the concert hall in Stockholm.

4

The father of Carl Milles was Swedish, and his mother was French. Little by little, the sculptor told us about his childhood and his early struggles. He had left home when he was just a small boy to study carpentry, and he worked for a man who made coffins. Every day, as he went to work, he passed a little thrift shop where a smiling young woman nodded to the little boy who peered into the windows as he passed. There was a violin in the window and Milles, with an uncrystallized desire for self-expression, set his heart on it. For several weeks he ate almost nothing and managed to save two dollars.

One day he walked into the thrift shop. "I want to buy the violin," he said. And he put down the two dollars, which seemed to him like a fortune.

"But, my dear," the young woman explained, "the violin costs ten dollars."

He looked at her with such disappointment stamped on his face that she gave him the violin. "And now," Milles said, when he told us the story, "every Sunday I ask this old lady to tea at our house. She is a nice woman and a real friend."

With his new violin tucked under his arm, Milles went in search of a teacher, who at first refused and then, touched by his pathos and his eagerness, agreed to give him lessons.

Poor Carl Milles! In his dreams of playing a violin he had imagined the moment when he would draw his bow across the strings, and a beautiful tone would result. Instead of that, there was a terrible squeak. He practiced hard but his teacher was short-tempered, and once, when Milles made a mistake, he banged him on the head with the violin so hard that he broke it. That ended his music.

Then he began to dream of becoming a sculptor. Paris was the place to study and at enormous sacrifice, walking most of the way, he came at length to the city and went in search of Rodin.

"I want to study with you," he said.

"I do not give lessons," Rodin replied.

"But somebody must clean your studio. Let me do that, and I can watch you work."

Rodin agreed, and Milles began to prepare clay and clean up, and all the time he watched Rodin while he worked. At night he slept on the floor in the studio. One evening he bought a copy of the Swedish *Dagbladet* to read before he went to sleep. There was an article in the paper announcing that a competition was to be held for a monument to a legendary hero of Sweden. Milles went to sleep and dreamed of the monument, which he saw clearly on top of a mountain. He awoke, got some clay, and began to sketch the figure he had seen in his dream. He sent the sketch to Sweden and won first prize. And so his career began.

Spring comes shyly in the north. Stockholm is a beautiful northern Venice. The sea is there, and statues, and monuments, and buildings like castles. Out in the sea itself stands a huge bronze monument made by Milles. It is about three stories high, a young man, nude, his arms stretched above his head. Milles called it "The Singer to the Sun."

Once in Sweden I was invited to a party where the monument was criticized severely. "Ours is a bourgeois town," one of the guests said. "Why these huge statues? What does it mean—a singer to the sun?"

And, glad of the opportunity to defend Milles, I pointed out, "But, madame, the sea and the sun are not bourgeois."

Milles was extremely kind to us. My husband played in a number of concerts in Stockholm, and Milles gave a big party for us. The following morning he telephoned.

"You know, Katinka," he said, "I never knew until today how much I love you both and the little Mischa. You know how crazy I am about my fountains in the garden, and especially the big one with the mosaic floor. This morning I was walking in the garden, and I saw some stones lying on the mosaic. I called the gardener and scolded him. He said, 'Perhaps it was the

little boy who played alone in the garden during the party,' and I answered: 'Then don't touch the stones. When I see them I will think of the little Mischa.' "

Mischa was going to a Swedish kindergarden so that he would have other children to play with. The school was run by a friend of Milles, a stout, kindly, and enthusiastic lady who became a celebrity in Stockholm. It happened this way. One day she got on a streetcar and bowed to a man who was sitting next to her. "Hello," she said cheerfully. "How are you?" Then she apologized: "Oh, I am so sorry. I took you for the father of one of my children."

A group of friends were talking one evening about the danger of swallowing things, needles, and so forth, and all of them seemed to know of cases that had been fatal or nearly so. Mischa, who had been listening, began to cry. "I swallowed a marble yesterday," he said.

In a panic I rushed to the telephone and called Milles. What should I do? Do nothing, he replied. He would telephone a famous doctor who was a great friend of his.

We waited, and I watched to see what would happen to Mischa. Then the telephone rang.

"My dear," Milles began in his slow way, "I talked to my friend—"

"Yes—yes—"

"He told me that when he was a little boy—"

"But what about Mischa?"

"He said," Milles went on deliberately in his unhurried fashion, "that when he was a little boy in school, many children used to play with marbles—"

"Hurry—tell me—"

"One of the boys used to swallow a marble whenever anyone gave him a penny for it. You see he made it quite a profitable business."

"But—what—"

"The doctor says the marble will come out."

Even when we left Stockholm, Milles's kindness continued.

He arranged another exhibit for me in Denmark, and we set off one morning with heavy hearts for Copenhagen, leaving behind us a beautiful sea filled with boats with colored sails, and a man who was a great sculptor and a great friend.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

EINSTEIN IN WAX

A STRANGE city has a different meaning for every newcomer who enters it. To me Berlin meant Albert Einstein, and when I went there in 1927 to hold an exhibition, my chief longing was to do a portrait bust of the great scientist. I had met him a year before in Paris at the home of Madame Paul Clemenceau, where he had sat beside me and talked and joked all one afternoon; but his utter detachment from his surroundings made it seem most improbable that he would remember me at all.

In preparation for the Berlin exhibition, I did the portrait of Alfred Kerr, a dramatic and literary critic who was a great power in Berlin, where he was known as a celebrity-maker. It was said that one favorable comment from his pen could make or mar the reputation of an actress. I had gone to him with a letter of introduction from Arthur Schnitzler in Vienna and asked him to pose for me. While I modeled his head he asked what other Germans I had done.

"Yours is my first portrait here," I told him.

"Whom do you intend to do?"

"What do you suggest?" I countered.

"Einstein, of course."

"Naturally I want to do Einstein, but though I have met him I think it unlikely that he would remember me."

"Never mind," Kerr said. "I am dining with the Einsteins tomorrow, and I will ask them. It all depends on his wife."

A couple of days later he telephoned to say, "No luck, my dear, no luck. Einstein has just got out of the clutches of an

artist who asked him to pose and took up so much valuable time that he and his wife were nearly mad trying to get rid of the fellow."

"But did you explain that I do not require more than six sittings?"

Kerr laughed. "This painter said he needed only two, and before he finished his canvas, poor Einstein had posed about forty times."

That seemed to end the matter, so I devoted myself to doing the portraits of other celebrities in Berlin. Among them was Meier Graefe, who had built his own reputation by the rediscovery of El Greco. Traveling through Spain, he had seen the canvases so long neglected by the world and written of them with such enthusiasm that a new cult for El Greco had grown up.

Then I did the portrait of Wilhelm von Bode, director of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum. He combined a German mind and mentality with a singularly English appearance. Indeed he looked strikingly like the old familiar illustrations of the grandfather of Little Lord Fauntleroy and, also like that imaginary character, he suffered from gout. Wilhelm von Bode was a great art expert, and on all matters save one his opinion was accepted without cavil. The subject for controversy was a wax sculpture called "Flora," a larger than life-size bust which he had unearthed and which he declared to be the work of Leonardo da Vinci. For twenty-five years he had fought for his "Flora" in the face of stormy denials by all the other critics. True, the beautiful face of the controversial figure had Leonardesque features, but experts had discovered modern materials inside the bust and would not accept von Bode's opinion.

It had become his King Charles's head, and he was at once interested when he learned that I worked in wax. While he posed for me, he told me at great length about his controversy, and later he wrote a foreword for my exhibition catalogue. The foreword, however, turned into a kind of autobiography, most of which was devoted to his favorite subject, the origin of his

wax "Flora." But I was proud of his gracious comments about my art, and, perhaps immodestly, I reprint them here. Von Bode wrote:

I have a great admiration for Madame Barjansky's work. Her sincerity and the frankness of vision which she brings to bear on each of her subjects give surprising vitality to these little heads, and a sense of something almost monumental. In choosing wax for her material she is only following the great sculptors of all time. Its color and its flexibility in clever hands such as hers give full opportunity for registering energy, humor, and any other of the distinctive qualities which her sitters may possess.

Then, through the kindness of a friend, I met the great German painter Max Liebermann, who also consented to pose for me. My friend, greatly delighted with his success, telephoned to tell me at what hour Liebermann would receive me at his home. "And ask him to show you his wonderful collection of French impressionists," he added.

"But you are a magician!" I exclaimed. "How did you manage it?"

"Well," my friend answered, an undercurrent of amusement in his voice, "I told Max Liebermann that you had great talent and did extraordinary portraits. Liebermann—he is eighty-six, you know—answered: 'That does not interest me. Tell me, is she pretty?' Naturally I said you are."

I was furious. "What sort of position have you put me in?"

"What do you care?" my friend retorted. "You want to do his portrait, don't you? Then go ahead and do it. What difference does it make that he is more interested in your appearance than he is in your talent?"

So I went to Liebermann, taking my wax and naturally feeling very awkward under the circumstances. He received me in his study. He was a little man with a big nose, expressive hooded eyes, a Spanish-Jewish type. His head was tilted a little to one side. He had an effective profile and spoke in a Berlin dialect that made everything he said sound funny and kind.

He showed me his collection. The whole house was filled with French impressionist paintings and Goya etchings. Then he sat down.

"Do you want to start in profile?"

"Yes, please."

I began to model in wax, and Liebermann, without changing his pose, cast sidelong glances in my direction. "Are you Italian?" he asked.

"No."

"But you *are* Italian," he corrected me in a decisive tone.

"No, I am Russian."

"You are Italian," he said in a manner that closed the conversation.

He was amusing to do, his face interesting, his conversation pithy and entertaining. For all his great age he had a mildly flirtatious manner, and one day he asked, "Have you a good memory?"

"Yes, very good, I think."

He shook his head regretfully. "Mine is very bad," he replied. "I often find myself forgetting that I am married."

When the portrait was finished, I asked the friend who had arranged with Liebermann to pose to ask him what he thought of my work. He came back laughing. Liebermann had said in his Berlin dialect, "She is gifted, she is pretty—and she is Italian."

2

A few days after my exhibition opened, I received a strange letter that concluded with the words, "I shall be more than happy if you will do the portrait of my father, Albert Einstein."

I was amazed and delighted, and immediately telephoned to the daughter, in reply to her letter. Mrs. Einstein answered the telephone and with great cordiality asked me to come to them the following Sunday at four o'clock. Of course I went, and Mrs. Einstein welcomed me. She was a cousin of the famous scientist, but it was not until middle age, when she was the

mother of two girls and had divorced her husband, that they had met. When Einstein had divorced his first wife, by whom he had two sons, the cousins married. In many ways they resembled one another, although his eyes were the warm brown of a deer's and hers were a pale blue.

As I had anticipated, Einstein did not remember me at all; but he was just as I had remembered him, kind, simple, and telling funny jokes. As usual, he laughed a great deal.

It was arranged that I would do his portrait in wax, working in the mornings upstairs in his little study. The Einsteins were living in a spacious apartment that seemed to be filled with the presents he had received from people all over the world. There was a huge living room, a large library, a spacious dining room, but Einstein worked in a little attic on the top floor of the building. The rooms were small and bare and unheated, and the scientist sat at his desk, wearing an old overcoat and galoshes.

I kept very still as I worked near him, moving only when it was necessary, and never speaking unless his attention was disengaged. He sat writing, doing his interminable calculations. Beside him stood a large wastebasket into which he threw page after page of his clear microscopic handwriting.

One day I asked him: "How do you work? Do you calculate until you reach a certain result?"

"No," he said, "it is not like that at all. I conceive the idea. It comes to me as an inspiration comes to an artist. Then I make calculations to test the theory, to find out whether or not I am right. Sometimes I work for a year or more—and sometimes all the work is for nothing."

He had an extraordinary capacity for isolating himself, even in the midst of a conversation in a crowded room. He was there with us; he smiled; but his eyes were not there. One felt that his spirit had left his body and he was really somewhere miles away. If one spoke he did not hear.

He adored music, and we had many musical evenings with him, as we lived only five minutes' distance from the Einstein apartment. He often played with my husband, either at his

home or at ours. He played patiently, adoringly, but his taste was ultraconservative, limited to classical music. Once, I remember, he was offered a magnificent rare violin, which he refused, saying such an instrument should belong only to a great musician. Playing was his favorite recreation.

One summer evening at his house Einstein was playing trios with Alexandre and a pianist. "It is too hot," he declared. "Let's take off our coats." And he began to peel off his own.

I saw an expression of horror on Mrs. Einstein's face.

"Albert!" she exclaimed. "My God, what happened to your shirt?" The sleeves were a series of jagged lines.

He laughed. "Oh, I got so hot," he explained, "I just chopped them off."

His laughter was not like that of anyone else. He laughed loudly and joyously, the unrestrained laughter of a healthy boy. Then, as unexpectedly as it had started, the laugh stopped short, and without any apparent transition he was completely absorbed in his thoughts again.

Mrs. Einstein, like the wife of any genius, had difficulty in coping with his eccentric and absent-minded ways. He never went on a lecture trip without losing things and bringing his suitcase back half empty. Once she was really provoked; and the next time he returned, she opened his suitcase to find in amazement that it was not only filled but beautifully packed.

"Who on earth packed for you, Albert?" she asked.

"Nobody." He enjoyed her surprise for a moment and then relented. "You scolded me so hard the last time," he explained, "that I just did not unpack at all. When I needed clean shirts I went out and bought them." He was looking so pleased with himself that she did not tell him the shirt he was wearing was at least three sizes too large.

One evening Mrs. Einstein came from the telephone to say that a cousin of hers had asked them to dinner.

"No," Einstein said, "I have sent for my pianist and I want to spend the evening playing the violin."

Mrs. Einstein returned to the telephone to refuse the invita-

tion and came back a second time. "She says you can play at her house. Have your pianist meet you there."

"All right," Einstein agreed reluctantly, "but only if there is no one else expected."

When he arrived that evening there were about fifteen people, all members of his hostess's family, and Einstein was furious. "You are a terrible person," he stormed at her, while she began to cry. "If I had known you had invited all these people, I would never have come."

Each morning I worked quietly in the cold little attic while Einstein, his dreamy eyes fixed on space or intent on his calculations, sat at his desk. When I wanted to see his other profile or full face, I moved as quietly as I could around him. Then I discovered why he had acquired such a distrust for artists who asked him to pose. One day the quiet and peace of the little attic was shattered when the distinguished German painter Orlik, who had done Einstein's portrait, came storming in to make a correction.

He tilted Einstein's chin at a certain angle, and then, as the scientist opened his mouth, said emphatically: "Don't speak! Don't move!" And though his concentration was broken, and his work interrupted, Einstein quietly did as the peremptory artist demanded.

He was very sweet with people. His secretary was a young man whom he had engaged not because he particularly wanted him but because friends of the young man had begged that he be employed. The secretary found it impossible to keep still and incessantly whistled tunes from musical comedies, disturbing Einstein terribly, though he did not say a word. One day the secretary put down for Einstein's signature a letter that bore little relationship to the one he had dictated. Instead of complaining, Einstein promptly signed the letter and added, "These are the words of my secretary. Now what I wanted to tell you was this . . ." and he wrote the entire letter in longhand. Yet it was done with such sweetness that the boy's feelings could not be hurt.

Just before I finished my wax portrait, some friends looked at it and said: "But why did you make the forehead so small? He has a huge one." It worried me, and at the next sitting I verified my proportions. I realized then why my friends had been misled. People who saw Einstein rarely were so impressed by his reputation as a man of great intellectual brilliance that they observed only his forehead and eyes and never saw them in their true proportion to the rest of his face.

Later in Belgium I saw him often. He had gone there from America instead of returning to Germany, and as a symbol of his contempt for Hitler and the Nazis and their persecution of the Jews he had returned his German passport to the German embassy in Brussels. All summer he stayed at the seaside, coming often to the palace at Laeken, where King Albert enjoyed talking to him and where he played quartets with the Queen and my husband and a viola player.

In spite of his reputation for solemnity and incomprehensibility he was always gay, full of jokes, and altogether charming. One day the Queen showed him a sculpture she had done with me.

"Did you do this yourself?" he demanded.

"Oh, yes!" the Queen replied. "Madame Barjansky never touches my sculptures. She has a very direct and original method of teaching."

He smiled. "You did not need to be a queen," he said, and the Queen blushed with pleasure at the compliment.

The Einstein villa at the seaside was a quiet and peaceful place, the doors and windows always open. And then it ceased to be peaceful, and Mrs. Einstein's uneasiness grew as she became more and more convinced that the house was spied upon by German agents. So it was that they came to America, which welcomed Einstein with open arms, giving him, as it has given so many of his compatriots, a haven and a chance to live and create in peace.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

D'ANNUNZIO, A STUDY IN BLACK AND WHITE

As the years passed, and I continued to do my psychological portraits in wax, rumors reached me from afar of the man who had inspired me in this revival of an ancient art. Much had happened. The First World War had ended, and d'Annunzio had become the Master of Fiume. In 1920, while we were living in Rome, my husband made several concert tours, and during one of his appearances in Padua two young men came into his greenroom, bringing the following letter:

My dear Barjansky,

I send you, by two chosen messengers a Fiuman greeting—which means a fervent one. Fiume is today the only place on earth where human fervor is most noble and most free. Do you remember our great hours of music and friendship? I know the power of your art and your spirit have attained the greatest height and I regret that destiny has separated us for so long a time. May I hope to see you here again in the ardor of this early spring? My two young brothers (the messengers) will tell you about our new life; which is manifested in the most harmonious forms of internal freedom. They both have my entire confidence. You may also accord them yours. Will you remember me to your admirable companion, that clear-visioned Tanagran of strangeness?

Au revoir,
GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO

The two young men related that d'Annunzio had seen in the newspapers that Barjansky was playing in Padua, and had at once sent them in his car to bring him to Fiume. My husband,

however, was unable to accept the invitation because of the demands of his concert commitments.

The letter reminded us both of our former letters from d'Annunzio, written in the style that had led one of his editors, on asking him whether he would translate his books into French, to suggest that he might also translate them into Italian. But on this envelope was printed, "Città de Fiume, Il Comandante." The stationery was of old-time magnificence, as large as a wedding invitation, and an emblem was engraved in the upper left corner. But this time, instead of a crown, there were heavy daggers, and the inscription read, *Cosa fatta, capo ha* (an accomplished action has a leader). Times had changed since the day when the poet had proclaimed that it is far more difficult to write a beautiful poem than to win a battle. The poet was now a soldier.

Without some insight into the quality of d'Annunzio's singular and incredible personality, it is impossible for anyone to understand the role he played at Fiume. It is often said that he was the founder of Fascism because Mussolini, the sedulous ape, adopted so many of the trappings of the d'Annunzio regime at Fiume. The resemblances, however, are more apparent than real. D'Annunzio did not care a fig for political power. His was an immense ego, and he was a man constantly in quest of grandeur. His model was the Roman Empire of whose restoration he saw but little likelihood as he was aware of only one great living Italian—and that was Gabriele d'Annunzio!

In politics he was a child. True, he had served as a representative in parliament, but his career there had been utterly fantastic. He treated the whole thing as a monumental joke. On impulse he had shifted his seat from the extreme right to the extreme left, and threatened to hurl all the deputies out of the window. Politically he was a dilettante, as he was a dilettante in living. He was not interested in political principles, but he was stirred by personal resentments, chief among them a corroding resentment over the manner in which Italy, its people, and its civilization, were regarded in Europe. Italy, he was deter-

mined, should take its rightful place; it should be respected as a great land and not ridiculed as the country of *opéra bouffe*.

On the other hand, he found little to bolster his grandiose conception of what Italy should be. The king, he said contemptuously, looked like a station master in a small town; he had no use for the military class; he had associated only with the ruling classes and among them he was so unpopular, because of his notoriously unconventional life, that he went into voluntary exile for years and lived most of the time in Paris. D'Annunzio, who loved to call himself *l'enfant de volupté*, tried to imitate in his private life the foibles of his own heroes, with the result that he profoundly shocked society.

When Italy joined the allies in the First World War, d'Annunzio returned to his own country, where to the surprise of all who knew him he became an aviator, writing pamphlets that he dropped over Vienna, calling upon the Viennese to surrender. When the war ended he was plastered with medals, regarded as a great soldier, and heralded as a heroic figure.

It was when the conference of the Big Four was held that d'Annunzio, writhing under the mockery so often showered upon Italy—a typical Latin reaction to the Anglo-Saxon—organized the partisans to occupy Fiume. And so began the curious dictatorship under d'Annunzio, whose analogies to the Fascism that followed have so often been traced, but whose profound differences are rarely recognized. Fascism, as it later developed in Europe, was a ruthless seizing of political power, but d'Annunzio's position in Fiume was an anomaly in history, the dictatorship of a man who did not value political power, who took his position at the request of the people, and who developed a constitution largely along communistic lines, with a preponderant role for the arts to which he had devoted his life. It was the symbols that were later seized upon by Mussolini and still later by Hitler, symbols that loomed large in the eyes of the people but that for the incurable romantic, d'Annunzio, had no more than a decorative and dramatic significance.

For it was d'Annunzio who provided the black shirts, an

adaptation of a Renaissance costume; who first used the symbol of the *fascio di combattimento*; meaning union; d'Annunzio who first harangued the crowds from balconies; d'Annunzio who introduced the old Roman salute, and gave himself the title *Il Duce*.

But—far more significant—his was also the first development of a military organization that was responsible to a single man and not to a government. And *that* was the seed from which Mussolini later developed his organization, using d'Annunzio's decorative symbols and—because he had no political principles of his own—largely adopting the concept of the corporate state from d'Annunzio's constitution.

There, however, the similarities ended. For Mussolini was essentially an uncultivated man, shaped in the socialist unions, for which he was an orator though far from being a leader. Mussolini was first and foremost an opportunist. His career was a phenomenon made possible by an Italian military disaster in 1917 that resulted in the death or capture of a great number of the Italian officers. As a result of this catastrophe, a new army was built up whose officers were taken not from the ruling class, as in the past, but from among the workers. These men became lieutenants, captains, majors. They fought well, and when the war was over they enjoyed, for the first time in their lives, considerable social success. Inevitably, they were reluctant to return to the lower classes from which they had come, and to which, under normal conditions, they would have been chained all their lives. Italy was ripe for a change, and the seeds of discontent and unrest were there.

Among a certain number of these men there was, as happens in every war, a continuing war psychology. There are men for whom war never ends as there are women for whom love never ends. It was these men, the restless, the malcontents, whom Mussolini gathered about him. But there was one important thing he lacked—prestige. During his whole career he courted monarchy, the Pope, and, in the beginning, d'Annunzio—yearn-

ing to be illuminated by the prestige he lacked. His was a parasitic intelligence, feeding on the ideas of other men; but if he had a paucity of ideas he was quick to seize those of others, and astute in availing himself of every opportunity to push himself ahead.

He had been a regular contributor to the newspaper *Avanti*, and without warning he disappeared for several days. Then on the fifth day a new paper appeared under his editorship, called the *Popolo d'Italia*, financed by a check from Painlevé, who wanted to use him as a propagandist for France. Now that he had a newspaper to serve as his mouthpiece, Mussolini attempted to rally about him the discontented elements of Italy. At once he thought of Fiume, where d'Annunzio headed the group of partisans who had revolted against the government.

Mussolini, therefore, determined to win d'Annunzio over to his cause, and he had the one great strength of the climber—he knew the weaknesses of others. D'Annunzio needed money. He had always needed money. Most of his life he was in debt, and he invariably lived far beyond his means. Accordingly, Mussolini opened a national subscription for the support of Fiume and, with a million dollars in gold, he came to make the presentation in person, like the showman he was. It was typical of d'Annunzio that he kept the man he had referred to slightly as a parvenu waiting for two hours before he consented to receive him—and graciously accept the money—while Mussolini, humiliated and fuming, cooled his heels in an anteroom.

As Mussolini's ambitions mounted, however, he began to fear d'Annunzio as a potential rival and made a pact with him. D'Annunzio was presented with the villa that had formerly belonged to the daughter of Cosima Wagner; he was provided with enough funds to continue his life of luxury; and he became a virtual prisoner, his luxurious villa surrounded by armed guards, his traveling restricted, his visitors inspected. D'Annunzio was out of politics, and Mussolini, with a flourish, took for himself the title first used by d'Annunzio: *Il Duce*—the Leader.

While d'Annunzio was still master of Fiume, I met in Rome his wife, the beautiful Donna Maria, daughter of the Duke de Gallese. She was delicate and frail, with a slim youthful figure and a haggard and tired face, whose faded quality was emphasized by her beautiful golden hair. Her pale blue eyes were mild and sweet but slightly ironical. She was a woman with a remarkable sense of humor, whose support she had doubtless needed.

Once she told me how she had met d'Annunzio. She was very young at the time, not more than eighteen years old. She had been brought up strictly, as was the custom in the great aristocratic families. In a newspaper she came upon a poem that greatly impressed her, written by a poet named Gabriele d'Annunzio. She showed it to her brother who told her that he knew the young man and, if she were interested, he would be delighted to introduce his friend to her.

A few days later d'Annunzio made his first appearance in the Palazzo Gallese. He was young, with long fair hair, extremely small, and wore a large iris in his buttonhole. Donna Maria found him so incredibly funny that she was obliged to hide behind the pillars in the living room to conceal her laughter. The duchess declared him to be impossible and could not stand him. But within a short time the whole picture had changed. D'Annunzio had become a daily caller at the palace; mother and daughter could not spend a day without him. Both of them had lost their heads and their hearts to the exotic poet.

And then, a few weeks later, the heavy door of the Palazzo Gallese was closed forever on the frail Donna Maria, when she eloped with Gabriele d'Annunzio.

"We married then," Donna Maria told me with a melancholy smile. "We were terribly poor and lived in the country. I was expecting my first child. Our house was filled with wild flowers

that Gabriele gathered in the fields and we were wonderfully happy."

3

I often remember a phrase of d'Annunzio's: *La mia età è sempre novella*. (My age is always a new one.) Years passed and d'Annunzio was now the Prince de Monte Nevoso, living in the home of the daughter of Cosima Wagner, Daniella von Tode, at the Lago di Garda.

This was in the late summer of 1929. At the time my husband, Mischa, and I were in Rome, visiting my husband's mother. Before returning to Paris, where we were then living, my husband wrote a note to d'Annunzio, telling him of our departure.

In reply there came a long telegram:

I am extremely happy to receive your letter. Come—come—come. I will send you my car to Brescia or to Besenzzano. Stop. I await you impatiently. I embrace you.

Your

GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO

Alexandre wired, "We will arrive Tuesday morning at Brescia at ten-forty."

It was a wonderful September morning when we reached Brescia and found awaiting us d'Annunzio's big cobalt-blue car. His chauffeur, dressed in a gray aviation uniform, a revolver at his belt, gave us a huge envelope sealed with cobalt-blue sealing wax, upon which were the arms of Prince Monte Nevoso.

The letter read:

MY DEAR ALEXANDRE,

I do not know how to express my joy, after having had some fears that you might not come. At last I will see you again through your sonorous wood, through the four chords stretched by a o'clock. My foresteria is not ready, but I beg you to accept my

saddened miracle. Luisa Baccara will come from Venice at five hospitality in a comfortable annex two steps from here, the Hotel de Fasan. We will make an appointment by telephone. I kiss the magic hands of Madame Barjansky and I embrace you, my brother in melody.

GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO

The stationery was bigger than ever before and of fantastic quality. The handwriting too had grown tremendously large. And in the left-hand corner there was, as usual, an emblem. This time it represented a man's strong hand over a burning pyre. Above this was engraved "Semper Adamas," and under it "Prima Squadriglia Navale." And then, "Il Comandante."

After a rapid two hours' drive we reached the Hotel de Fasan, on the Lago di Garda, where a charming apartment was ready for us.

The garden of the hotel, full of orange and lemon trees in fruit, sloped to the lake. From our windows we looked down on this beautiful deep-blue lake with its island in the middle that belonged to the Roman Prince Borghese.

About three o'clock the telephone rang, and d'Annunzio spoke to my husband. "I am sending you my car. Please bring your cello with you. I beg Madame Barjansky to bring some of her wax sculptures and also the son."

Before the fence of his villa stood two *carabinieri* in full uniform. The car came in, turned and stopped before a small door over which was written, "Clausura Silenzio." We walked a few steps, and the butler took us into a small room furnished entirely in old Italian ecclesiastical furniture, a lectern, caskets, and church benches from the time of the Renaissance, wonderful brocades on the walls, the only modern object—what a paradox!—being a plane propeller that hung from the ceiling. Instead of a door there were heavy gray velvet draperies through which d'Annunzio, whom we had not seen for fourteen years, would appear. He must be a very old man by now, we realized.

Then we heard rapid steps, the drapery was thrust aside by a nervous hand, and d'Annunzio, more robust than we had ever seen him, astonishingly young and healthy, stormed in.

He embraced each of us and suggested a race with our ten-year-old boy, asking him to feel his muscles. Then he took us into a library where his other guests were awaiting us.

There were the Baccara sisters from Venice; the older, Luisa, a fine pianist, had been a faithful and unselfish friend to d'Annunzio ever since the Fiume adventure. She had a beautiful madonna face, olive skin, dark melancholy eyes and, though she was still young, white hair. Her sister was young and pretty.

There was another guest, an astonishingly beautiful, silent Englishwoman, tall and slim, with wonderful heavy auburn hair. She listened with the greatest attention, her green eyes constantly amazed, and she did not understand anything.

From there we went into the music room, where we found the atmosphere of d'Annunzio's Parisian apartment of 1914, only more magnificent. Again we found a huge couch with dozens of cushions—gold, silver, brocade. Countless works of art. A heavy black and gold brocade hung in straight folds on the wall. Two pianos—"One of them belonged to Liszt," d'Annunzio told us. Liszt, of course, was the grandfather of Daniella von Tode to whom the house belonged. And on the wall hung Liszt's death mask. I was amazed that the face could be so young as the pianist had died at an advanced age.

"Oh, my dear," d'Annunzio said, "I invite you to come and see me one hour after my death and you will see how young and handsome I will be."

He asked my husband to play Bach for him, and unwillingly I admired his wonderful capacity for concentration. When the cello was silent again d'Annunzio rose and embraced my husband. "*J'ai honte pour tous mes péchés*," he said quietly.

Luisa Baccara accompanied Alexandre on the piano that had belonged to Liszt, and together they played sonatas of Beethoven and Brahms. Then d'Annunzio wanted to see my sculptures, and we went into his studio, the huge room in which he worked, simple, modern, comfortable, the only room in the whole house that was really lighted, for everywhere else there was a soft half light.

There I showed him the wax portraits he had not seen: Colette,

Frederick Delius, Antoine Bourdelle, Arthur Schnitzler, and many others. He studied them penetratingly, as he listened to music. It was astonishing that this egocentric, selfish, and extremely personal artist had the generosity to forget himself entirely when he was interested in the work of another.

And, as in the past, the magician told us many stories. Then I showed him a wax figure that I called "Homage to Duse." It was not a physical portrait of her, but a symbolic figure, a tragic woman walking through life with invisible chains on her hands. D'Annunzio understood and was silent. He showed me a mold of her hands with an old-fashioned gold ring set with a pale ruby that belonged to her.

"She came here to me," he said, "before she went to die in America. She came because she had heard I was ill. I was ill, but I went to the door of my house, and there I awaited her, kneeling. She came to tell me goodbye." And again he was silent for a long while. Then he asked me to leave my sculptures in his studio, because he wanted to look at them again at his leisure during the night.

Blue predominated in the dining room. On the round table was a gold cover and over this a tablecloth of silver lace. In the center stood a large gold bowl filled with yellow and white September roses, and there were roses strewn on the cloth. The table was set with d'Annunzio's beloved Murano glass and wine pitcher and the rarest china. The first course was served on Sèvres, the second on old Chinese; finally, for dessert, we had massive silver dishes. D'Annunzio tried to make us believe that he had not eaten for forty-eight hours because, he said, he was at work on a new book and his brain and imagination worked better on an empty stomach; but that was his excuse for his triple appetite.

The conversation turned, as was inevitable in that house, to Franz Liszt, and d'Annunzio said, "I had the great luck in my youth to attend one of his concerts in Rome, after which I went to express my admiration. Liszt received me with warm kindness, for even then, young as I was, I was marked by destiny.

He invited me to come to his house and promised to play for me alone. He was living in Rome at the Monte Mario.

"Some months later, on a warm and beautiful summer night, I was walking with an exquisite young girl in the direction of Monte Mario. We were deeply in love, and the moonlight was bewitching. Suddenly we heard from the open window of a little villa ahead the sound of a piano. A divine melody mounted to the sky like a pillar on a Gothic church. Only Liszt could play like that.

"Forgetting entirely my sweet and astonished companion, I rushed to the house—luckily the door was open—and entered the room where Liszt was playing. It was dark and only the silver light of the moon illuminated the noble and inspired profile, and the long, white, diaphanous hands on the keys that created the magic tunes. Liszt improvised. The happiness of that moment belongs to eternity. When the last sound died and the night was silent again, we heard a frantic cry, 'Gabriele! Gabriele!'

"Liszt started. 'What is that?' he asked.

"Maestro, it is my little friend. I left her in the middle of the road.'

"Why didn't you bring her with you?' Liszt said kindly.

"Because, maestro,' I confessed, 'I did not dare. She is very pretty.'"

We laughed, and so did the silent English girl, who apparently had not understood a single word.

The following morning I came once more, bringing wax with me, and began the portrait of d'Annunzio. I modeled his thinking head, resting on his two hands. His eyes were strange—one sharp and lively, the other indifferent and dead, for its sight was gone.

"Last night," he told me, "I studied your wax portraits, and I sent a wire to Colette." He showed me a copy. "This magician, Caterina," it read, "brought me your portrait bust in wax, through which I tried to penetrate into the secret of your noble prose."

That evening d'Annunzio showed us his mortuary chamber where everything was prepared for his death. Solemn stood the death bed that would one day receive a poet's body. Yet nothing was macabre. The room was a curious combination of a Byzantine and a pagan chapel, made ready for the secret hour of passing into eternity.

During one of the sittings d'Annunzio told me a strange story. "Once," he related, "when I was writing in my studio I heard soft steps. Out from the wall a small man walked slowly toward me. His figure was somehow familiar, and I tried to remember who he was. Suddenly I recognized him. He was Michelangelo. He embraced me and gave me a kiss on the forehead and then disappeared. On my forehead now I feel an empty triangle which I know I must fill out with a noble idea. I have not yet found it, and to do so I must work until my last hour." All this he told me in absolute earnest.

When we left him, I tried to find the phrase that would most please him in return for his wonderful hospitality. And I found it. "You are so much d'Annunzio," I said.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

PAGES FROM MY SKETCHBOOK

It was while he was living in Belgium as a voluntary exile from Mussolini's Italy that I met Count Sforza, one of the most charming and interesting men of my acquaintance. Handsome and patrician, adventurous and courageous, highly intelligent and endowed with a keen sense of humor, he was a man whose friendship my husband and I prized and in which we delighted.

He had served his country brilliantly during his long diplomatic career, rising to the high post of foreign minister. He was serving her now, in exile, by his firm refusal to accept the leadership of Mussolini. When the dictator seized power, Count Sforza, who was ambassador to France, turned in his credentials. Nothing swerved him from his stand; not personal interest nor fear for the future of his children, whom he took with him into exile; not poverty nor the hard work of earning his living. Mussolini, in retaliation, promptly confiscated all the count's Italian property although, if the latter had agreed to return to Italy he would have been granted almost any position or honor he desired, for Mussolini desperately needed the support of men with such prestige.

Count Sforza chose Belgium for his place of exile because his wife, formerly the Countess d'Udezeel, was Belgian by birth. She followed her husband wherever he went, never questioning his decisions, for she had great faith in his judgment and pride in his principles. She was a white-haired woman, dignified and kind, dressed always in black, without a trace of make-up, her somewhat old-fashioned appearance and gravely kind manner lighted by a warm and gracious smile.

One is inclined to forget that in the early years of Mussolini's power, he was accepted by leaders who today call themselves liberal, and many of the men in high political position who now heap scorn upon the fallen dictator were then loud in his praise and heralded him as the savior of Italy, a brilliant political leader, and a man lighting the way for other nations to follow. But not Count Sforza. He spoke of Mussolini always as a *cabotin*, a cheap comedian, a man of dishonor who was leading his country to degradation and destruction.

The count lived modestly with his wife and two children, supporting them by writing articles and by lecturing. Even in these simple surroundings he was an impressive figure, extremely handsome, with fine features, dark eyes, very tall with broad shoulders. In his house one always met interesting and unusual people, whom he usually received wearing a sumptuous deep blue Chinese robe that was heavily embroidered. Among his circle of friends and one of the most assiduous in his visits was the young King Michael of Montenegro, a cousin of Prince Humberto, whom I met there many times. In fact, he came so often that Count Sforza's friends referred to him as "your domesticated king."

Count Sforza had a strong sense of the comic, and it was always a delight to hear him tell of his experiences in the many lands in which he had served his country. He particularly loved China, and he had brought a number of Chinese objects into exile with him.

Once, looking up at a lamp that hung from the ceiling, I remarked, "What a curious lamp."

"I brought it from China," Count Sforza explained. "It is very old and the same shape as those that are used on rickshaws." He began to laugh. "That reminds me. There was a woman at the American Embassy while I was in China who said: 'How wonderful these people are! And so respectful of Americans. Whenever I go out in my rickshaw the people stand and watch me pass.' I could not bear to tell her," the count added maliciously, "that on the lamp of her rickshaw was written: 'Come look at the beautiful courtesan.'"

I met him often in Belgium, at dinner parties, at his own small house, and as the guest of the King and Queen, for King Albert had the highest respect for Count Sforza as a statesman and often talked politics with him for hours on end. One Christmas he gave me an exquisite Chinese cup and saucer. "I did not know what to give you," he confessed. "I have two of these. One of them was given me by the Emperor of China. The other one I simply took from him."

When he was preparing to leave Italy for China, he related, some friends presented him with a statue taken from the ruins of Pompeii, which he placed on the mantelpiece in the Chinese Embassy. As soon as he arrived, he paid the customary call upon the Emperor and, according to protocol, the latter's brother returned the visit a half-hour later. Chinese etiquette required that the guest look about the room and comment politely on what he saw, so the Emperor's brother remarked, "That is a charming statue."

Count Sforza explained that it had been excavated at Pompeii.

"Oh, yes! To which of our dynasties does that correspond?"

Count Sforza answered him, and the Emperor's brother smiled. "I always admire you Europeans," he said, "for your love of modern art."

On another occasion Count Sforza told me a charming story of his youth, when he served in the embassy in London. He had been working hard that day and it was midafternoon before he was free to go to lunch. He wandered into a little tearoom that was almost empty. Only one other customer still lingered over her lunch, a pretty young girl, very English in appearance. Count Sforza looked at her, and the girl looked at him. He smiled. She smiled. He raised his eyebrows. She nodded her head. In a moment he had moved over to her table.

Her name, she said, was Mary. "You aren't English, are you?" she asked.

"No. Italian."

"What are you doing here?"

"I am a macaroni salesman."

On the following Sunday afternoon the macaroni salesman

and his Mary went boating on the river, and they spent other afternoons together, then evenings, then nights.

There was to be a gala affair at court, and the count in full dress, wearing his decorations, a sword at his side, walked up the great staircase, on either side of him a man carrying a spear, while at the top a voice announced, "Count Sforza!"

The count glanced around. The first person on whom his eyes rested was a pretty girl in court dress, three plumes in her hair. He stopped and swallowed hard, but as he passed she leaned forward and whispered, "I never really believed in that macaroni."

When summer came the Sforzas went to the south of France, where they owned a little villa on the seacoast. They were homesick and after visiting them there once I understood why they had chosen this particular spot. For here you would think you were in Italy, the sea was so blue, the cypresses so tall. Here their Italian blood was warmed after the fog and cold of Belgium.

It was while the Sforzas were at their villa in southern France, in the summer of 1940, that two of their friends paid them a hurried visit. Mussolini, they said, had issued a secret order that Count Sforza was to be put to death. Within half-hour the Sforzas were gone, without luggage, and they took passage on a cargo boat to England, traveling for days with nothing but oranges to eat.

Eventually they came to America, and it was on Long Island that Count Sforza learned, over the radio, that Mussolini had fallen.

So he went back at last to serve his country loyally as he has always served her. When he left my parting words were, "Goodbye, first president of Italy."

In Taormina, Sicily, my husband encountered Raoul Dufy, the great modernist French painter, whose life in some respects

bears an analogy to that of Gauguin. Like the famous impressionist, Dufy spent his early years in an uncongenial business. For thirty years he devoted himself to the task of making designs for the Bianchini textile factory, and all that time his dream of becoming a painter remained, undimmed and unaltered, in his heart. Some day . . .

Then, that summer of 1921, when my husband discovered him painting in the Greek Theater at Taormina, he took the first real holiday of his life, and he went to Italy. Dufy was a prodigious worker and within a couple of months he painted eighty canvases. From the first they revealed an original talent and a highly personal point of view. His work was extremely modernistic and at the same time, particularly in its use of color, it had a quality reminiscent of eighteenth-century art. For Dufy is a great colorist; his golden yellow, his blues, his pinks are unrivaled today. He never tired of seeking new ways of mixing colors, achieving effects that were extraordinarily luminous and bright.

For a few minutes Alexandre watched the painter, studying the curly hair, bright blue eyes, eager and intent face, and then asked whether he might be allowed to see the water color on which he was working. Dufy promptly showed him his sketches, and when they had lunched together, the French painter brought out the other work he had done. My husband knew then that this was a great artist.

When Raoul Dufy left Sicily and went to Florence, where I was living at the time, my husband asked him to look me up, which he did, and I liked him at once. He and his wife took an apartment in the hotel where I was living, and together we visited the museums and explored the city. Dufy painted constantly. I told him that he was always on the lookout for Raoul Dufys to paint.

At that time Italy had not yet become Fascist, although Fascism was beginning to exist in a latent state, and groups of young and noisy hoodlums were already making themselves offensive on the streets. One evening when I was watching

Dufy paint Florence at sunset from the Piazzale Michelangiolo, three or four of these young men gathered around to watch him work. They muttered to themselves about the modernism of his painting, and their voices grew louder and louder until they were shouting, hurling every insult their impoverished minds could think of at the painter, who went on working steadily, trying to ignore them until he had snared on his canvas the flaming colors of the sunset. The foreigner, these young self-appointed art critics sneered, was ruining and distorting the beauty of *their* Italy.

The noise became too much for Dufy, and he put away his unfinished sketch, washed his brushes as though he had all the time in the world and then, turning slightly, flicked off the water, bespattering the young fascists, and strolled off with me.

Though the best part of his life was over before Raoul Dufy was able to paint, he did not face the usual lot of the original artist once he began his real career. He had something new to say in his canvases, and the critics recognized immediately that here was a fresh and an important talent. On his return to Paris from that first painting holiday, Dufy took his canvases to the Bernheim Galleries, which promptly bought the whole collection and put it on exhibition. Because he was a fabulous worker, Dufy began to hold exhibitions everywhere, gave up his job, and devoted himself entirely to painting. His great triumph came during the World's Fair in Paris for which he painted gigantic frescoes, using the brilliant colors that he himself created.

In the heart of Montmartre, in a very old house, he had a studio, with walls stained blue. In that restful blue atmosphere I used to sit for hours discussing art and life while Dufy painted indefatigably. At that time he was doing a number of portraits, all highly modernistic in technique and, as he was well aware, bearing little resemblance to his sitters. Once he gave one of these portraits to the man who had sat for it and said with his infectious smile, "*Tâchez de lui ressembler.*"

As long as I remained in Europe we encountered each other

in many cities—in Vienna, in Brussels, in the quiet village where Delius lived. Today, like Renoir, he is crippled with rheumatism, working, when he is able to work, with difficulty and pain. And I remember Renoir's gallant comment when a friend, watching his tortured efforts to paint with a crippled hand, protested, "Why do you go on? It only causes you agony."

And Renoir replied, "The pain passes. But the beauty remains."

3

At an incredibly early hour one morning in Vienna, somebody hammered at the door, and my husband stumbled, half asleep, to answer it. There stood our irrepressible friend, Luigino Franchetti, so exuberantly glad to see him that Alexandre could not scold.

Luigino swept through our apartment like a hurricane, turning our lives upside down and, from long experience, we resigned ourselves to following his caprices for as long as he intended to stay.

"I am going to play with the Philharmonic, with Bruno Walter conducting," he announced excitedly. "Now I must practice." And he coolly appropriated our piano and set to work on a Chopin concerto.

During the days preceding the concert Luigino either worked frenziedly at our piano or came dashing into the house, bringing an assortment of friends to see us. During the rare moments of comparative peace he talked about Bruno Walter whom he considered the greatest of all conductors.

I sat close to the stage at the concert, where Luigino played the Chopin superbly, and I saw Walter make some comment at which Luigino laughed. Afterward my husband and I went around to the greenroom, but we did not meet the conductor for Luigino impatiently swept us away to supper.

"What did Bruno Walter say to you?" I asked.

Luigino chuckled. "I felt so happy to be playing with him that I forgot all about the audience, and I was singing aloud.

Walter said, 'I wish you would play louder and sing more softly.'"

Some years later at a supper party given by the Hungarian composer Emanuel Moor, who invented the two-keyboard piano, I finally encountered Bruno Walter.

"I don't believe we have been introduced," he said, coming up to me.

"But I know all about you. Luigino speaks of you frequently."

"Then I know about you too," he said, "for Luigino has told me about you." And we were friendly at once. From that time on I met Bruno Walter in many cities where he gave concerts and I gave exhibitions; and in New York, in 1940, I did his portrait in wax.

It was not an easy portrait to do because his face combines great sensitivity with a certain ruggedness of feature, and that quality of sensitivity is extremely difficult to capture in sculpture. The structure of the head is interesting and beautiful for it is a thinking head. This, one sees at once, is a man of ideas, one of the rare musicians who has vast culture outside his own field. Other people grow old but Bruno Walter matures. He has a great talent, a great heart, and a great spirit.

His eyes are deep, dark, and glowing; the nose short. The forehead is lofty and the mouth sensual, a balance between the spiritual and the emotional that is revealed in the emotional range and richness of his conducting.

When I think of Bruno Walter, I always remember Einstein's comment, "When Bruno Walter conducts, he himself is the music."

4

I turn the pages of my sketchbook and find a portrait in startling contrast to that of Bruno Walter—the head of the Japanese artist, Fugita.

Among the dancing couples at the Société des Intellectuels in

Paris in 1925, I saw a strange little man with exotic clothes, an oriental face, and big eyeglasses with black rims.

"That is the celebrated Japanese painter, Fugita," my partner said in answer to my query, and introduced us. I asked Fugita to pose for me, and he arrived the following afternoon at my studio. He wore a pale-lavender suit and pale gray suede shoes, a shirt of ivory silk and a large white felt hat. His typical Japanese face was flat, the hair combed down in bangs and polished. He had a wide flat nose and so small a mouth that it was narrower than his nostrils.

While he posed Fugita talked about himself. When he first came to Paris to study art, he said, he was so poor that he slept on the floor of his empty studio. He posed for other painters and in the evenings played oriental instruments in night clubs to make enough money to live on. His greatest handicap, he said, was not his poverty but the fact that he had been trained in the formalized oriental school of painting. In an attempt to seek release from its conventions, he experimented with all sorts of narcotics. By the time I met him, he had become one of the leading French modernistic painters, particularly famous for his feminine nudes and his studies of cats.

Curiously enough his extremely exotic type of face proved to be easy to do, and his portrait in wax was quickly finished. His face was immobile and even when he talked it did not alter its expression, and the problem of his eyeglasses—usually a difficulty in sculpture—was easy to solve, because his face was so flat that the rims of the glasses fitted flat over his face.

5

Through the poet Jean Starr Untermeyer, who spent the winters of 1923-1924 in Vienna, I met an attractive girl with an English face and the pink-and-white skin of a baby.

"You two will have great fun together," Jean said. "This is my friend, Dorothy Thompson."

I have rarely met anyone as dynamic, as full of life as Dorothy Thompson was at that time. And Jean was right. We *did* have great fun together. All that afternoon and until late that night we talked and talked.

She had a beautiful apartment in the diplomatic quarter in Vienna where she lived with her husband, a charming and extremely handsome young Hungarian named Josef Bard. She told me he was a philosopher, engaged in writing a wonderful book.

In the mornings Josef Bard boxed with a boxing teacher. In the afternoons he sat in their attractive living room, surrounded by friends, and talked. Dimly, from Dorothy's office at the other end of the apartment, came sounds of telephones ringing, typewriters clattering, people coming and going. Dorothy was busy dictating to several secretaries her articles for American newspapers, taking telephone calls from Berlin and Warsaw and London. Or she disappeared on quick jaunts to Yugoslavia and all corners of Europe for her journalistic work. They were a popular couple in the intellectual society of Vienna, and at their parties one always met celebrities of the intellectual and artistic world, political figures and famous journalists.

Later I met Dorothy Thompson again, this time in Berlin, where she had a beautiful apartment on the Tiergarten overlooking the parks. She was sad and nervous. Josef, she said, had fallen in love with one of her friends in England, and she was starting divorce proceedings.

One day when she was lunching with my husband and me, she said: "May I telephone? Our greatest American writer is here, and I want to interview him."

"Who is he?"

"Sinclair Lewis."

She called the hotel and got Sinclair Lewis. "This is Dorothy Thompson," she said.

"Hello, Dorothy."

"I want an interview. May I come to you, or will you come to me?"

"I'll come to you, Dorothy. How about tomorrow afternoon?"

The following afternoon, as it happened, Dorothy Thompson was giving a big cocktail party, and Sinclair Lewis appeared. He had a strange narrow face with deep-set eyes, which I later modeled in wax, and it was apparent from the response of those who gathered around him that he was most entertaining. Unfortunately for me, my English was then very poor, and his was so American that I had great trouble in understanding him.

After a while Dorothy picked up a notebook and said, "Now let's talk a little."

Sinclair Lewis leaned over, took the notebook out of her hands and began to make a rapid sketch.

"What are you doing?" she asked in surprise.

"I'm drawing the house in England where we are going to live after we are married," he said blandly. "You see, this is the living room. The windows look out on a garden. And this . . ."

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE MIDDLE DISTANCE

It is a far cry from that old world—much of it bombed out of existence, some of it still clinging to remnants of faded grandeur, nearly all that is left depleted with weariness and sick at heart—to the new world that faces the future, alive, so terribly alive and vigorous, and filled with hope.

It was in 1930 that I first saw America, though I had long been eager to visit the country about which I had heard such conflicting accounts and read such curious opinions. It would be an interesting experience to give some exhibitions in New York.

I was prepared for the sky line, for the buildings that reared up into the heavens, for the gleaming of steel towers by day, for the fingers of light that probed the clouds by night. What astonished me was space. Knowing of the many high buildings, I had expected to find the streets as narrow and cramped and dark as the alleys of Naples. But everywhere there were broad avenues; space to move in at ease, to live without huddling against others; space for open vistas. And space in itself is a kind of freedom.

This was a country with room for one to expand, to grow to one's full stature; room for growth, physical and spiritual. After tired Europe, it was an exciting impression. It seemed somehow symbolic that in this new land people lived in the sky like birds, as though, even on their wide streets there was not enough space to satisfy their questing vision.

But the most appealing thing for the artist was the light of America. Few people here realize that most of Europe is

dark—so very dark. In the winter months, in all the northern cities, one must have artificial light by two o'clock in the afternoon; but here one looks at the sky, ablaze with light, at the buildings dazzling with the sun reflected on them, and thinks that it is July, while out of doors it is December or January, and sharply cold. The whole dynamism of America rests in its wonderful light.

At the time of my first visit there was still a persistent belief in Europe that the American people were uninformed in matters of art, that they lacked traditions and cultivation and appreciation of art. It did not take long to discover how far this was from being the case.

The United States had such music, for instance, as Europe dreamed of but could not hope to possess; not one but half a dozen of the world's leading orchestras, with the finest conductors and the ablest musicians. The result was that the American people constantly heard great music played in the grand manner, and consequently they were able to develop their taste and understanding more rapidly than the impoverished Europeans who, hearing music more imperfectly presented, for the most part, had to discover its beauties and divine its meaning for themselves.

The head of the Society of the Friends of Music was then a wonderful person, Madame Lanier. She was an aristocratic-looking woman with silver hair and beautiful blue-gray eyes.

One day, a French lieder singer came to see her at her charming house in New York, saying that she wished to sing for the society. "I will sing," she said haughtily, "some lieder that you are unlikely to have heard."

Madame Lanier, with her customary grace, invited the singer to go up to her musical library, where the proud European found, to her astonishment, a complete library, ranging from the rarest old scores down to the moderns. And she learned, as other Europeans were to learn, that the American public was as knowledgeable about music as any audiences anywhere.

Madame Lanier devoted all her time, with infinite patience

and tireless zeal, to her beloved society. She was not only eager for audiences to hear the best in music, but she was quick to protect and, if necessary, to fight for her musicians. I remember a typical story that went around at one time.

A well known music critic attended one of the concerts of the Friends of Music and wrote an article about it that was exceedingly uncomplimentary. Madame Lanier immediately sent him a letter, to call his attention, she wrote, to the fact that some disastrously uninformed young man from his newspaper had written a stupid account of the concert and signed it with the critic's name. She was afraid, she said, that he might not have seen the criticism and she knew that he would want to prevent such a thing occurring again, because it might do irreparable damage to his reputation.

But it was not Madame Lanier alone, nor the New Friends of Music alone, in which I found America's great wealth of culture. One found not only fabulous collections of paintings but a widespread interest in all its phases, a feeling that it is an adventure—which is most invigorating.

On that first trip to America I was accompanied by my husband and my son, and I even brought with me a French cook. My son already spoke English well as he had visited England with us many times. His school in Europe recommended the Lincoln School in New York, so I went with Mischa to see the director, who agreed to take my boy, although it was late in October, and school had already started.

When I inquired about the fees, I was appalled; they were so much higher than those in Europe. The director saw that I was startled, and he suggested, "Leave your son here for a while." In an hour he telephoned to say that Mischa had been given a scholarship which would enable him to study for one-third of the original sum. Years later, my son came across the tests he had taken that day. Written across the paper in red pencil were the words, "This is the highest I.Q. we have ever had."

We settled down in a comfortable apartment and sent out

letters of introduction. Within a few days our living room was crowded with our new American friends, and I discovered an amusing thing. People who are not trained observers see only what they expect to see. The apartment we had rented had been furnished by the previous tenants. The furnishings were conventional, the pictures on the walls were old American family portraits. But because our guests knew that we were Russian, they were all greatly struck by the exceedingly Russian character and atmosphere of our apartment. Even a cigarette box that had been presented to us by Madame Lanier and purchased at Cartier's, came in for much admiration because it was "so richly Russian."

Because I have lived in many countries, and, particularly, because as an artist I have learned to "see," I have escaped the common error of having set opinions about countries, about people: Italy is like this, an Englishman is like that. A country for you is only what you can find in it, so it is different for everyone. A person for you is only what you believe him to be. The rigid limitations are in ourselves, not in nations or in individuals. It is an unhappy thing that so many of us substitute opinions for observation. People look, but they do not see. They do not learn to see. And so they miss the greatest adventure of all, the adventure of discovery and a fresh viewpoint.

2

My first American portrait was that of the celebrated banker and art patron, Otto Kahn, to whom I had a letter of introduction. He came to tea, saw my wax sculptures, and was willing to belong to my collection. I began work at once, sometimes modeling at my apartment, sometimes in the library of his sumptuous home. There, surrounded by exquisite art objects, he posed for me near his fireplace, over which there hung a superb Rembrandt in golden shades, the pale and pathetic face of a young Jewish boy.

Another of my sitters was a curious man, William Bahr, an

expert on Chinese art, who was greatly loved in New York. One met him everywhere, at dinners and parties. As I worked on his wax portrait, he told me a great deal about himself.

It seems that he had lived in China—he was half Chinese—where he was a wealthy coal merchant. Each day, as he went from his home to his office, he passed an antique shop which he frequently entered because he had an innate love for beautiful things. Occasionally he bought something he particularly liked, and in time he had an extensive collection.

Then Mr. Bahr met an Englishman who had been sent to buy Chinese art for a museum. He showed the man from London the collection he had made, and the Englishman not only was greatly excited, but promptly offered a staggering price for it. In surprise, Mr. Bahr told him deprecatingly that he exaggerated its importance. It could not possibly be worth so much money. But the Englishman insisted, and Mr. Bahr parted with his collection. In return, he received a check which amazed him, for the amount was not, as he had supposed, in Chinese money but in English pounds.

Up to this time, art collecting had been only a casual hobby for Mr. Bahr, but now he thought, "If I can put together so valuable a collection without knowing anything about art, and make so high a profit, I had better study." So he gave up his business and devoted years to an intensive study of Chinese art. Eventually, he came to New York as a dealer and an authority on his subject, became one of the advisers of the Boston Chinese Museum, and arranged the celebrated Chinese exhibition in London.

I learned much while he talked, for he revealed a whole new world to me. When I asked whether he would show me some of his pictures, he politely consented and brought a long roll which he hung from a high pole in the center of the room. Slowly he unrolled the picture.

"My dear," he said, "this is one of the four wonders of Chinese art."

I looked and looked. At first, I not only did not understand

it, but I could not really see what was in it. Then gradually I distinguished two trees with their branches curiously intertwined. And I looked and looked. Finally, in the strange yellow, reddish, dusty colors I saw a curious dragon surrounded by clouds.

Nearly half an hour had passed in silent contemplation when William Bahr said quietly, "I call this picture *Tristan and Isolde*. Those two trees, so near one another, clinging to one another, give me the same feeling as the love duet in Wagner's opera."

On a later occasion he told me how touched and grateful he had been when I was silent in the presence of this marvel of Chinese art. It made him nervous and furious, he said, to display these sacred works to society ladies who exclaimed, after a cursory glance, "Oh, how cute!"

It was an interesting experience to do this man, who was big and athletic, with occidental features; but in whom, when his eyelids drooped, one detected another race. And always he told me strange and wonderful things—how the Chinese could sleep profoundly if they found a little insect they call the harpist and put it under their pillow. Then, all night long, they will hear the soft ping of a harp string.

Once I saw a magnificent branch of orchids on his table and exclaimed at its beauty.

"I was so lonely," he said, "that I was forced to go out and buy them."

So I learned that the Chinese need not be lonely. Only there must be flowers where they are.

3

While I was strolling along Fifty-sixth Street in New York, I passed a little house that reminded me of a French villa. It housed an art gallery. I went in and realized that these would be ideal surroundings in which to display my tiny wax sculptures, because the rooms had low ceilings and beyond the en-

trance there was a charming oval room. The gallery belonged to Mr. Jonas, who had another on the Place Vendôme in Paris. The second floor was devoted to his fine collection of Italian paintings, but on the main floor modern artists exhibited their work.

Mr. Jonas came to see my wax sculptures, read the moving page. Colette had written about my art, and suggested giving me an exhibition. So in February, I began to put on the shelves my little sculptures, portrait busts of celebrated people from all over the world, some American portraits I had done, and many imaginary figures, nudes, sacred sculptures, and others. All my works were listed in the catalogue, divided into groups, with each group beginning with the number one. Mr. Jonas arranged the exhibition beautifully and, to my amazement, hundreds of people appeared at the opening, few of whom I knew, as I had been in New York only five months.

Then I got a shock. A group of people had gathered around the bust of Otto Kahn—and they were laughing! A little investigation cleared up the mystery. Someone looked at Mr. Kahn's portrait and saw the number seven. Glancing perfunctorily at the catalogue he read, "Number seven—Venus."

Not long before my exhibition, I was invited to a large cocktail party, where a young man whom I did not know began to talk to me.

"How can you, who are so European, endure the speed of this town?" he asked.

"But I do not think," I protested, "that America is so fast. Certainly the water runs faster in American tubs than in European ones. Your subways go faster, and your elevators, and all mechanical things. But in other ways you are much slower than we. For instance, you go to a bank for a simple transaction. They offer you an arm chair and chat for three quarters of an hour. You go to the opera in a taxi that travels no faster than one could go on foot. If you want to do any business, you must go first to lunch or dinner, and after endless conversation you get the answer, "We must think it over."

The following night the telephone rang. "Have you seen the *Evening Post*? There is a big article about you." And the calls kept coming, and I grew more and more uncomfortable until my husband got a copy of the paper. There was a long article with a big headline: "Mme. Barjansky explodes myth about this being speedy town."

My heart stood still. Now, I thought, I am finished. No American will have anything more to do with me. I have been unforgivably indiscreet.

But it was all right. People were amused by my unorthodox attitude, and many of them came to me, at the exhibition, to ask more about my impressions of this country.

4

After my exhibition closed, I opened a school of sculpture in New York, where Henry R. Poore, a distinguished art critic, called on me, observed the progress of my pupils, and wrote a comprehensive account of my teaching method. Then he asked whether I would give a lecture on art at a New Jersey art center some time during the following autumn.

"But how can I with my English?" I protested in a panic.

Mr. Poore, however, was not so easily discouraged. "Your English will amuse them," he declared. "The essential thing is that you know what you will talk about."

But I did not know what I would talk about. Still, November seemed very far away, and Mr. Poore had been so gracious that I could not bear to refuse him. So, comforting myself that there was a great deal of time in which to prepare my lecture, and anyhow I might be run over before then, I said, "Yes."

There was so much time before me that I put it off and put it off. In the spring we went to New Hampshire, where we remained until October, when the woods were aflame with color that was somewhat dimmed when I received a printed invitation which announced that Madame Caterina Barjansky would be the speaker at the art center on November 10th.

I figured rapidly. There were twelve days left in which to

prepare my lecture. We returned to New York, and my husband rushed into my room to say: "I have a concert at the Library of Congress in Washington on November 8th. We must go down tomorrow."

"Impossible," I told him. "I must stay here and make notes for my speech."

"But we are acquainted with no one in Washington," he pointed out. "You will be able to work in peace there just as well as you could here."

So I went. What we had overlooked was American hospitality. We were entertained at luncheon and at tea, at cocktails and at dinner. Never for a moment were we alone. On the 8th of November my husband gave his concert, and I did not have a moment to think of my own problem.

It was the evening of the 9th when we returned to New York.

"Now," I said firmly, "I am going to set to work at once on my lecture."

Just then my cook appeared in the doorway, her face green. "Madame," she said fatalistically, "I am going to die."

A doctor came and left a special diet, and I got to work. But not on the lecture. I cooked for my family, and I cooked for my cook, and I performed a dozen household tasks. There was no time at all to make notes.

The 10th of November dawned, and I did not have a single note. Worse than that, I did not have a single idea. Perhaps in the taxi—but we were so late that the taxi driver ripped like a madman through traffic and sailed through red lights, with my husband excitedly goading him on. The speed, the excitement, the lurching of the cab, all made me sick, and I could not concentrate.

At the art center an impressive group of ladies welcomed us and swept us off to a banquet, where I was assailed on all sides by the most unexpected questions. There was so much confusion that I could not think. Then up to a hall we went where some three hundred and fifty people had gathered to hear the lecture that had been announced so far in advance.

I was introduced in a long speech, and then I got up to face

my audience. There was not a thought in my mind. *You've got to say something*, I told myself, and a voice which I did not recognize as my own said faintly, "My English is not good. May I speak to you instead in Russian or German or Italian or French?" Not, I had to admit to myself that it would make much difference. It was not words I lacked; it was ideas.

Something in my quiet desperation made my audience laugh. So I began to talk about laughter and what a rare and lovely and important thing it is. I must have gone on for twenty minutes. My audience began to look somewhat surprised. And in the back of the room I saw my husband, who knew I had nothing to say and who paced wildly up and down while he waited for the roof to fall on my head.

Then I forgot that I was making a speech, and I just began to talk to them, telling about some of my experiences in doing portraits. And another terrible thing happened. *I could not stop!*

I talked and I talked and I talked. Finally—I don't know how it came about—the lecture was over. To my surprise there was prolonged applause, and all those three hundred and fifty people came up to shake my hand. Next day my right arm hung limp and useless at my side. And one young girl said earnestly to me: "You have inspired me for life. Thank you so much."

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

THE PALETTE

AFTER that first trip to the United States, my husband and Mischa and I returned to Europe, where, as usual, we traveled from country to country while Alexandre gave concerts and I modeled and taught. But as the years passed, a change came over the face of the Continent, and there was fear and the talk of war. As it had been in 1913, everyone was preoccupied by politics and harassed by forebodings. There was no conversation except of security in which no one really believed. People had begun even then to suspect that in the contemporary world there is no longer any security except what we can forge for ourselves in our own spirits. There was no place for art, and art was the only thing to which I could make any useful contribution.

In 1939, I had a school of sculpture in Brussels. In the past my studios had always been places of peace and filled with the joy that comes with creating, but this one was uncomfortable and edged with uneasiness and hostility. Among my pupils were people from almost every embassy except those of Russia and Germany. There were ladies from the embassies of many nations.

Into my quiet studio came echoes of the hostilities and antagonisms of the outside world. If anyone spoke—and someone frequently did—with indignation and bitterness about Hitler's activities, an embarrassing silence fell in the corner where the wife of the Italian ambassador modeled.

One of my pupils was Madame Kurusu, the American wife of the Japanese ambassador, a large, stout woman whose two daughters were like flowers, delicate, smiling, infinitely polite.

Often someone from the English embassy would ask her rather mockingly whether Japan was still carrying on its war of conquest with poor China. Madame Kurusu would protest that it was not a war—not really—just minor skirmishes, which had been misrepresented by the newspapers, a reply that provoked ironical smiles and left discomfort behind it.

Later, at the time of Pearl Harbor, when Kurusu was sent on his treacherous mission to President Roosevelt, I could not help thinking that his government deliberately put him in this position as a punishment for his marriage to an American.

Those "minor skirmishes" had aroused bitter indignation all over Europe and the university students were particularly vociferous in their hostility to the Japanese militarist government. One day the aroused students of the University of Brussels, hundreds of them, wildly excited, shouting, waving placards, surrounded the villa which housed the Japanese embassy.

When the shouts and the turmoil reached the ears of Ambassador Kurusu, the door of the embassy opened, and a footman in full uniform politely invited the students to come in. They were taken aback but they promptly crowded into the huge reception room where they milled around uncertainly. For some time they waited, and the unexpected position in which they found themselves combined with the prolonged interval of waiting cooled their frenzied excitement. In fact, they began to feel rather awkward and embarrassed.

Then the doors were flung open, and a procession of footmen came in bearing huge trays of tea which they passed to the bemused students. Not knowing quite what the proper procedure of an indignation meeting should be, they hesitantly accepted the tiny, charming Japanese cups and automatically found themselves sipping tea and thus accepting Kurusu's hospitality.

At length the ambassador made his appearance and a deputation of the students explained to him, with none of the wild fury they had displayed outside, how indignant they were over the conduct of the war in China.

Kurusu listened politely, smiled, and assured them blandly that he would do his best to stop the war. And so the "incident" ended in polite comedy.

The war had already begun in France, but it was then in that strange quiescent stage which made people refer to it as the "sitting war." There was uneasiness in Belgium but no sense of immediate danger. No one believed that Hitler would repeat the tactics of Kaiser Wilhelm and send his troops marching through Belgium.

There was no place left in Europe where an artist could create undisturbed. Alexandre and I discussed it over and over. I wanted to leave, but he preferred to remain. His friends were there and his public and his life. But for me life is not static, it constantly renews itself; there is always a fresh canvas on which to create a new picture, always wet clay to be shaped into a new form.

At length, we came to the conclusion that he would stay in Europe, where he felt most at home, and I would go away.

So one morning I went to my son. "I intend to leave for America," I told him. "Will you come with me?"

"I will go with you anywhere you like," he replied promptly.

I began to arrange for my passport, visas, and steamer tickets. The evening before my departure I walked for the last time in the park at Laeken with the Queen, and we stood long beside the lake with its hundreds of black and white swans. During the war, all the swans disappeared. I do not know whether they were eaten by the Germans or whether they died of starvation.

That night there was a moon which made the whole park unreal, as though it concealed untold mysteries. And, indeed, I never came to the end of its surprises in all those years.

For instance, there was a little pavilion where long ago King Leopold II had lived. For many years the doors had been locked on its empty rooms. Then on one of her walks in the park, the Queen came across the pavilion and decided to make her home there. After the death of King Albert, she found it too painful to go on living in the palace rooms where she had been so exceedingly happy with her husband.

The pavilion was a one-story building in the middle of the woods, wide and low, with a terrace from which there was a magical view of the lake and its swans. The big living room was furnished in simple, modern style, with deep armchairs drawn up to the fireplace. Everything was done in light green and pearl-gray. Beyond this were the Queen's personal rooms. There were two entrances, one from the park and one from the greenhouse, through which, in case of rain, she could make her way to the palace where her son, King Leopold, was living with his three children.

And once the Queen showed me a real fairy-tale house in the depths of the woods. It was a house which she had planned for her grandchildren; a charming, imaginative world of play and make-believe that could have been created only by a poetic woman. It was a small cottage whose roof was made of turquoise-blue tiles. The living room was done in Swiss style and had a big Dutch oven. Each child had his own room, all of them decorated in an amusing way with the walls painted by a young Belgian artist. In every room there were birds in cages, and flowers and plants at the windows. Near by there was a small enclosed paddock for horseback riding.

Prince Baudouin, the oldest son—and the only one of the three who did not dislike the public appearances which they were all required to make from time to time—had a room whose walls were decorated with sketches representing all the sports: a man on horseback, someone skiing down a hill, people playing tennis. In little Prince Albert's room, there were reproductions of all his toys in a frieze around the walls: all sorts of animals and trains and games and playthings. Princess Josephine had a gay and cozy little room in which she could study, and a big kitchen where she learned to cook.

I remember a funny scene. The Queen was seated near the window of the pavilion, drawing, when little Princess Josephine raced into the room, clutching in one hand her coat and in the other a toy electric iron which had been given her as a present.

"It's a real iron," she cried. "I can iron my coat!"

She plugged in the iron which soon heated. The little girl was so excited that she hurled herself at the Queen who fell on the floor, her drawing flew out of the window, and all three of us laughed madly.

During those last days before the catastrophe, I often met King Leopold in the park, dressed in blue dungarees, his collar open. He was sunburned, and with his golden hair and blue eyes he was a handsome man. He glowed with health, for he frequently played golf and he went swimming in the pool which he had constructed in an abandoned chapel in the park that had been built during the reign of Leopold II. As the old King had a mania for glass roofs, the chapel had been built with one, and sunlight flooded the pool.

It was a big pool, the floor made of mosaics of every shade of blue, ranging from sky-blue to a deep turquoise. All around the water there were rare plants from the famous greenhouse. In winter, by daylight, you could swim in the pool and through the glass dome you could see the sky and sometimes snow falling on the roof. And at night there were lights so arranged that the water changed from blue to red to pink and all possible colors. At one end there were diving boards, low ones for the children and a high one for the King, who was an excellent swimmer.

Not long before I left Belgium, I met the King at the little pavilion. That day Hitler had made one of his hysterical speeches at a big gathering in Berlin and all Belgium had listened in fear and disgust. King Leopold was white with rage.

"Those Germans!" he exclaimed hotly. "There's only one way to get rid of them—gas them!"

Later, I remembered that when he returned to the palace at Laeken as a German prisoner, and the newspapers proclaimed that Leopold was a traitor who had been dealing with the enemy.

This time I knew that I was not merely moving on to another country. I would remain in America, create a new life there,

and become an American citizen. All of which I have done.

When Europeans are disgruntled or critical of America and question my enthusiasm for this country, I grow impatient.

"What can you, an artist, take from America?" they ask me.

And I reply: "Must I always take? Perhaps I can give."

But America has given me much, as it has given much to all those who come to it for comfort. Even the right to work is a gift in itself. For the émigrés who moved from country to country in wartime Europe received temporary asylum, perhaps, but not the right to work.

Surely no other place in the world offers the same possibilities. Over and over I have encountered stories that could be duplicated in no other land. In Europe, if one fails at the occupation he has undertaken, he remains a failure to the end of his life. But here one may fail at the first job and then try a second and a third until he finds what he can do best.

And there is room for ideas, simple ideas which can be developed to the maximum. I remember the case of a young woman in a small town who made a beautiful apron. Her neighbors admired it, so she made some for them. Other people wanted aprons like it, and she began to make them for sale. Soon she had thirty seamstresses working for her, and in time there were three hundred, and the woman who made the pretty apron became a millionaire.

There was another woman whose husband died, leaving her with several children, a number of debts, and no money. In Europe, such a woman would have been in despair or would have kept herself alive by taking in roomers. But this woman had an idea. She got a job in a factory, became acquainted with the other workers, met their friends, went out with them in the evenings, lived like them.

At the end of a month she took another job and at the end of the second month still another. After a year of varied experiences, she went to a lecture agent and arranged to lecture about the things she had learned, the people she had met, the conditions she had encountered. And she made enough money to assure the future of her children.

So I was not afraid of starting a new life in America. I was filled with confidence. Always I have been convinced that what one believes in intensely enough will come true. Again I took an apartment with a studio, and once more I began to give sculpture lessons.

My son entered Columbia University, where he lived in one of the dormitories with his closest friend, the son of Count Sforza. In time he got his degree in mathematics.

He was going down in an elevator at Columbia with a gentleman who glanced inquiringly at him several times and then asked, "Are you a student or a teacher?"

Mischa laughed ruefully. "I am no longer a student, and I am not yet a teacher."

"Teacher of what?"

"Mathematics."

"I have come from Catalina Island," said the gentleman, "in search of a teacher of mathematics and physics. What are you doing tonight? Let's dine together."

They did, and a week later Mischa received a contract and went to Catalina Island to teach. His first letter described his rooms, his classes, his initial experiences as a teacher and ended: "And so to bed. Good night, Mr. Chips."

When war came to America, Mischa put his many languages to work for the Office of War Information, then spent eighteen months in the army and later, as an American civilian, was sent to France where, as acting director of the United States Information Service, he was responsible for interpreting American ideals to the French public. Since then he has been acting chief of the Radio Network Control in the American zone in Germany.

He has retained the serenity he had as a child, and remains my dearest friend and the person to whom I turn most readily for wise and understanding advice.

For seven years I have worked in my studio that faces Central Park, flooded with wonderful light, and during that time I have

seen many people come and go, new friends from the new land, old friends from the old—many of them among the dispossessed, all of them uprooted, some of them looking oddly different when one sees them against a new background and in a new light.

Those who have found the largest measure of contentment are the creative people. Not merely those who can make a statue or a painting, a symphony or a poem. In every normal human being there is creative ability of some sort.

Many times in my life I have met people who were unhappy because they did not know how to apply their particular gifts to the circumstances in which they found themselves. Once a dear friend of mine told me how unhappy she was because she could not have a stage career. She was dissatisfied because she wanted to create beauty, and she had always associated beauty with the theater.

"But there are other beautiful things," I pointed out. "There are flowers. See all this unused land around your house. Buy it. Learn how greenhouses are run. Get a competent gardener to help you." So she learned to cultivate flowers, and by doing so she satisfied her chief need, which was to create beauty.

There was a sad old Russian who once came to see me in Belgium. In Russia, he had been a judge, but now his occupation was gone. He seemed to be excluded from every activity because he could not master the French language, and all his specialized knowledge was of no use to him. He was not yet old enough to accept such an inactive existence.

Suddenly I had an inspiration. "Do you like books?"

His eyes warmed. "I love them."

"Why don't you do bookbinding?" In Europe, books come out unbound. "You would have fun creating bindings to suit the character of the books."

He began to study and became an important bookbinder, with all the satisfaction of making something himself, and so he found happiness.

For me happiness is always associated with color and I be-

lieved that color plays a great part in tinting people's moods, whether or not they are aware of it. For instance, one can never quite capture the same tingling joy on a gray day that one can on a sunny day. Certain shades of red or green or blue can lift a melancholy mood and bring a deep, unconscious joy.

Color has exercised an enormous effect on my life. There are colors that remain in my mind, associated with certain cities or landscapes or museums. In the Metropolitan Museum in New York, behind some madonnas and angels painted in the sixteenth century, there is a piece of coral velvet from the same period. It will remain in my mind always, a glowing spot of red to warm me.

There is some green brocade I found in Bargello in Florence; the wonderful blue in the hills surrounding Rome; the emerald dining room of one of my friends in London.

Because of that nostalgia for color, I have always longed to do polychrome sculpture, for it is the nature of sculpture to be polychrome. After all, the sculptures of Egypt and Greece were colored. What has come down to us has lost its color. Unfortunately, color would be indescribably vulgar with the materials in which we now cast our sculptures.

Occasionally, to feed my hunger for color, I devote weeks to working in ceramics. It is great fun to manipulate a piece of gray, wet clay, to put it through all the phases of design, modeling, baking, glazing, gilding, and transform this little fragment of earth into a precious-looking jewel, glowing with color.

Creation is in nature. Look at plants. They are always growing, always in action. A human being is the same way. If he is healthy, he cannot be inactive, he has to make something, has to be creative in his own way.

And America helps one to create, that is one of its best gifts. I have come back from the MacDowell Colony, founded by the widow of the American composer, Edward MacDowell, to provide a place for the creative artist to work undisturbed in ideal surroundings and at an absurdly modest cost. Hidden in

the beautiful New Hampshire woods are twenty-seven studios, little stone houses, isolated from one another, and surrounded by Christmas trees. With their open fires, their comfortable arm chairs, their comfort and seclusion, they afford conditions for work which the artist dreams of but rarely realizes.

There is absolute silence, broken only by the elaborate conversation of the birds. One can work with no interruption, no breaking of one's mood, in a place of beauty. One can lie in the sun under a tree and enjoy the smell of the pines and the air and the wonderful solitude—a solitude in which there is always some communion between the human being and nature.

I wonder why the same idea is not tried in other parts of the country, in other parts of the world. For in the final analysis, a city or a nation or a civilization is judged by its creative artists. It is not the bank or the factory that one wants to see in a new community; it is its works of art, its libraries, its fine buildings.

This rare place in the mountains of New Hampshire is a source of creativeness that can give America a glorious future.

4

I have set down here these portraits and backgrounds, sketched in words and drawn from memories of a life that has followed no beaten path but that has always been interesting.

Why these portraits, these backgrounds, rather than a dozen others? I hardly know myself, except that certain pictures cried more loudly for expression than others. One could, of course, go on and on, turning the pages. There was Krishnamurti, whom Annie Besant believed to be the reincarnation of the Christ, making a fantastic spot of color in my mind as he posed for me in a hotel room wearing a rose silk suit, while his enormous eyes looked solemnly at me out of his thin face. There was Prince Serge Wolkonsky, dreamer in art; there are countless men and women, seen for a moment or known for years, and etched in line and color in my mind.

But I close the book on these pages from my life. The models in many cases are gone. The cities where I knew them lie in ruins. Even the world of which those cities were a part has vanished into the past.

But the artist cannot live, looking back over his shoulder. He cannot paint shadows alone. He needs the light. He must look around him and ahead, for there are always new pictures to be found, new lines to be cast in plastic form, new color breaking like a sharp revelation on his delighted senses. For as long as the senses record and the mind can design, the artist must create, using not only his imagination and his energy, but finding even in his personal sorrow and pain the materials to shape new beauty.

And once more I think of Renoir's brave phrase: "The pain passes. But the beauty remains."

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